



**EL PACCTO 2.0**

EU-LAC Partnership on justice and security

# CRIMINAL NETWORKS AND ROUTES FROM THE CARIBBEAN TO EUROPE: A DEEP-DIVE INTO COCAINE TRAFFICKING AND OTHER ILLICIT ACTIVITIES





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DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.18385156

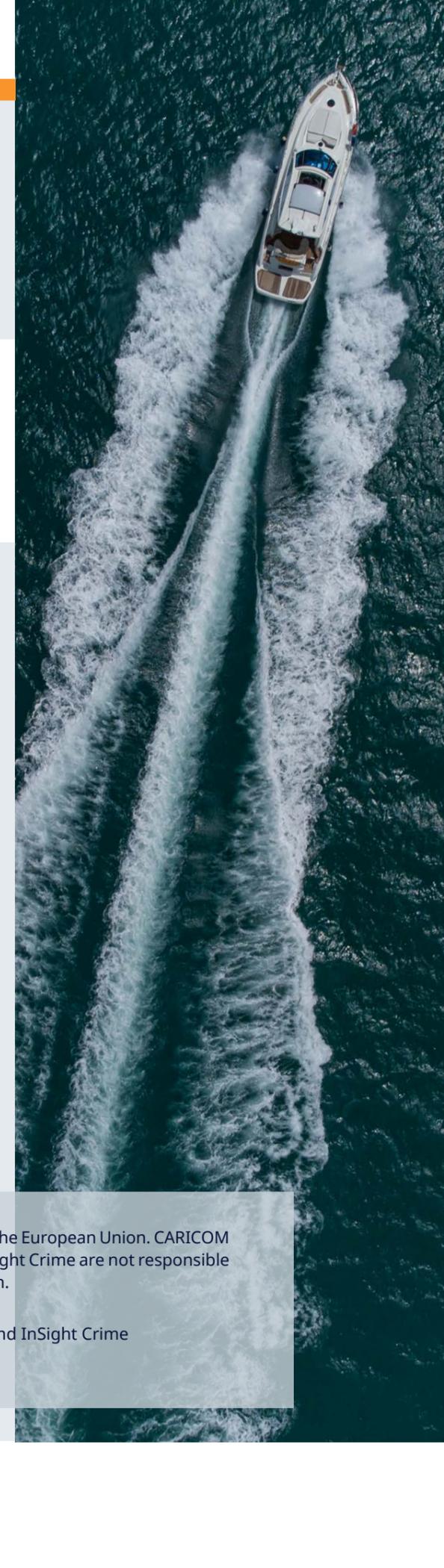
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Non-commercial edition  
March 2026

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# INDEX

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## 4 INDEX

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## 5 INTRODUCTION: CARIBBEAN'S PIVOTAL ROLE IN THE COCAINE PIPELINE TO EUROPE

---

### 8 KEY TAKEAWAYS

---

## 10 CRIMINAL DYNAMICS IN THE SOUTHERN CARIBBEAN

CRIMINAL NETWORKS

KEY TRAFFICKING CORRIDORS

METHODS USED BY CRIMINAL NETWORKS

DISRUPTIONS TO SMUGGLING ROUTES

---

## 16 SPECIFIC SUB REGIONAL AND COUNTRY ANALYSIS

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

VENEZUELA

EU OVERSEAS TERRITORIES: DUTCH AND FRENCH ISLANDS

GUYANA, SURINAME AND FRENCH GUIANA: THE SOUTH AMERICAN CARIBBEAN

---

## 43 CONCLUSIONS

# INTRODUCTION: CARIBBEAN'S PIVOTAL ROLE IN THE COCAINE PIPELINE TO EUROPE

The Caribbean has long been a central node in the global cocaine trade. Once the primary bridge for narcotics destined for the United States, the region has evolved into a significant transit and departure point for cocaine bound for Europe's expanding consumer market. This shift has been enabled by a combination of strategic geography, and a diversification of international smuggling routes and methods.

The Region's geography and European ties have made it a springboard for traffickers targeting Europe; the same maritime and air routes that sustain tourism and commerce also provide infrastructure for smuggling.

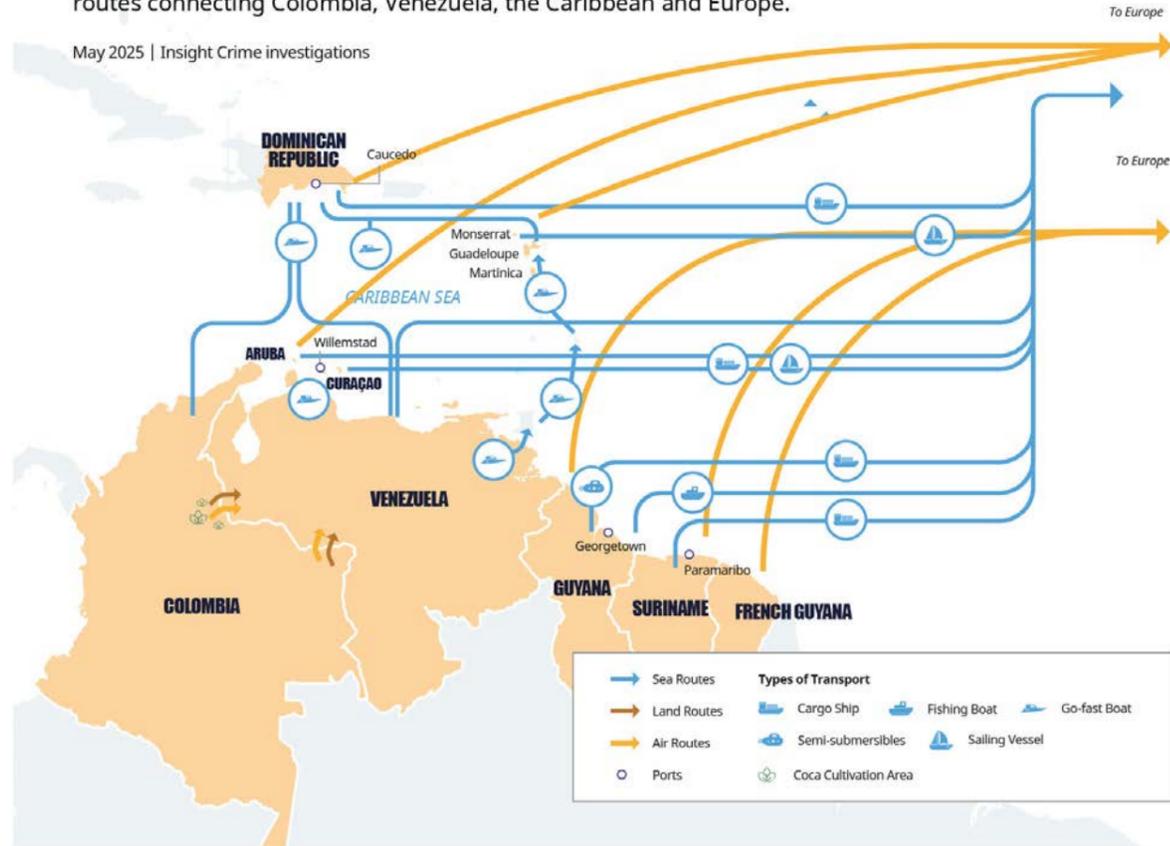
In general, criminal networks that move cocaine from South America to Europe through the Caribbean are highly dynamic and adaptable. They consist of diverse actors operating at every stage of the supply chain. Colombian, Venezuelan, and Dominican traffickers typically manage transportation, while brokers from various nationalities coordinate logistics and link suppliers with buyers.



# ROUTE OVERVIEW: CARIBBEAN

This graphic provides a preliminary overview of cocaine-smuggling routes connecting Colombia, Venezuela, the Caribbean and Europe.

May 2025 | Insight Crime investigations



While most of the cocaine smuggled to Europe via Central and South America leaves via containers, the Caribbean offers a wider array of possible vehicles to move drugs: commercial cargo ships, containers, yachts, fishing boats, cruise liners, small inter-island transports, semi-submersibles and narco-submarines, commercial airliners, air cargo, and smaller private planes. Using this variety of options, drug traffickers can move between islands and different departure points to confuse patrols and avoid detection.

Some larger islands, such as the Dominican Republic, stand out as key transit points, with sophisticated criminal groups leveraging extensive port infrastructure to move large quantities of cocaine to major EU ports. The Dominican Republic is likely the single most important Caribbean nation in drug trafficking terms, due to its extensive port and transport infrastructure, in addition to a booming economy and tourist sector, which offer plentiful opportunities for illicit financial flows and money laundering. Other nations, such as Trinidad and Tobago, face persistent challenges stemming from proximity to Venezuela – a major transit nation for transatlantic cocaine shipments.

Several smaller islands also play an important role in the cocaine channel. French and Dutch overseas territories such as Curaçao, Aruba, Bonaire, Sint Maarten, Saint-Martin, Guadeloupe, and Martinique provide direct commercial and air links to European cities like Amsterdam and Paris. Small yachts and pleasure craft regularly travel between the Caribbean and Europe, providing opportunities to move cocaine discreetly between islands and into Europe itself.

The Guianas – Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana – also occupy a strategic position along the Caribbean smuggling corridor directly from South America. Their proximity to Colombia, combined with relatively sparse law enforcement capacity, extensive river networks, and lightly monitored borders, makes them attractive transit and departure points for EU-bound shipments. Traffickers may use these territories to move cocaine northward to Caribbean islands or eastward to ports in West Africa, a frequent stop-off before arriving in Europe, or directly to Europe. Increasingly, there are signs that Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Suriname and, at times, The Bahamas are used as staging points for semisubmersible vessels loaded with cocaine that venture deep into the Atlantic Ocean. In the case of French Guiana, its status as an EU territory further simplifies logistics for traffickers seeking direct links to France.

Most of the cocaine flowing through the southern Caribbean originates in Colombia and transits through Venezuela, which has long served as an important transit nation for EU-bound shipments. Venezuela’s proximity to the Caribbean offers traffickers short, flexible maritime corridors that can be adapted quickly in response to law enforcement actions.

Yet even the most established drug-smuggling routes are not immune to heightened interdiction efforts. In 2025 and 2026, intensified US naval patrols and aerial strikes on small vessels departing Venezuela, as well as the US intervention in Venezuela and the forced regime changes, have caused significant disruption along major drug routes, forcing traffickers in some areas to temporarily halt operations or reroute shipments. There are no signs, at least yet, that the overall flow of EU-bound cocaine has decreased following the deployment of this US flotilla.

Against this backdrop, this report examines the Caribbean’s growing role in the global illicit goods supply chain, with a focus on the flow of drugs to Europe. It maps the principal routes and trafficking methods, profiles the criminal actors driving the trade, and analyzes how state and international responses are reshaping the region’s criminal landscape. Additionally, the report also deals with increasing role played by some countries in money laundering, as well as the interaction on drug trafficking and environmental crime from a polycriminal groups perspective, with a focus on Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana.



# KEY TAKEAWAYS

The Caribbean’s flexible role in the cocaine pipeline to Europe poses a significant challenge for policymakers. The criminal ecosystem is not static but highly adaptive, responding to enforcement pressure by shifting routes, methods, and alliances. The following takeaways highlight some important considerations for addressing this challenge:



Caribbean cocaine routes are exceptionally diverse. The region’s unrivaled range of smuggling methods, transit corridors, and departure points means that when one route becomes too risky, traffickers quickly adopt alternative pathways, ensuring the continued flow of cocaine toward Europe. Tracing these shipments requires deep collaboration and information-sharing between Caribbean investigators and partners in EU destinations.



Brokers are the fundamental pieces of the board. They provide services related to logistics, drug storage and safekeeping, transport security, funding and money laundering. International brokers, primarily from Europe and the Western Balkans, are the most significant. Identifying the brokers is key to effectively combating drug trafficking.



Ports remain the most important departure points. The contamination of legitimate cargo at commercial shipping

ports throughout the Caribbean remains the highest-volume and most cost-effective method for moving cocaine to Europe. However, security checks vary significantly from port to port, meaning traffickers may begin to target secondary terminals with limited interdiction infrastructure if scrutiny increases at busier ports. Ensuring ports have the tools to identify and control high-risk areas – particularly container yards, loading zones, and security checkpoints – and prevent collusion with criminal groups would reduce opportunities for traffickers to compromise these facilities.



Increased law enforcement pressure produces temporary shifts. The US naval deployment has highlighted the localized impact of law enforcement pressure. While the strikes on go-fast boats have temporarily reduced their appeal in the southern Caribbean, traffickers are certainly shifting routes and methods. Land, river, and air routes to Central America, the southern Caribbean mainland, and the Amazon have increased in volume. Likewise, traffickers may opt for transport methods outside the scope of current military options, such as yachts, container ships and aircraft.



The use of aircraft as a method of transportation. The use of small planes to Guyana and Suriname from Colombia and Venezuela has increased dramatically. Those illicit loads, mainly drugs, are then



transported to the EU or Western Africa with cargo vessels and semi-submersibles. The use of automated aquatic, underwater, and aerial drone systems should be taken into account.

The cocaine pipeline to Europe thrives on corruption and poverty. The primary methods for moving cocaine through the Caribbean rely heavily on corruption. Identifying and investigating complex corruption networks is a task that needs improvement, restricting the impact of anti-drug policies that often focus on seizing cocaine. Likewise, many coastal, rural, and island communities participate in cocaine transshipment because there are few economic alternatives. Without improvements in these conditions, trafficking networks will continue to find willing intermediaries.



Local, itinerant, and decentralized groups are fundamental. The polymorphic, small, and dynamic structure of local groups, primarily in the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, and Guyana, is key to facilitating drug trafficking from entry into the country to exit.

# CRIMINAL DYNAMICS IN THE SOUTHERN CARIBBEAN

## CRIMINAL NETWORKS

The organized crime landscape in the Caribbean is characterized less by large, hierarchical drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) and more by fluid, transactional, and discreet networks. This decentralized structure makes criminal enterprises highly adaptable and resilient, functioning more like outsourced service providers than monolithic organizations. Within this ecosystem, different actors occupy distinct roles: South American DTOs supply the cocaine, transnational brokers orchestrate the supply chain from a distance, and local facilitators are subcontracted to execute logistics, local transportation and stocking.

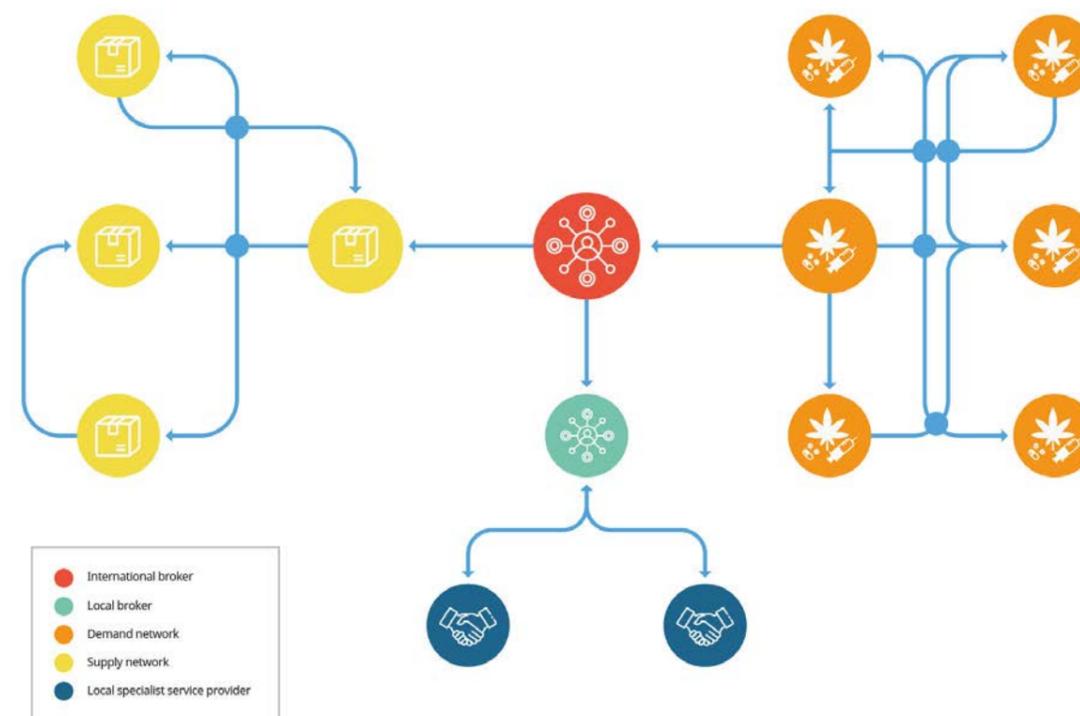
Most criminal networks based on Caribbean islands operate as subcontractors for larger DTOs. Their main responsibility is coordinating specific drug shipments and facilitating logistics and movement of drugs and other illicit within the countries, whether for transit within the region or departure to Europe. This model is particularly evident in the Dominican Republic and Trinidad and Tobago, where local “capos” or gangs oversee the reception of shipments and preparation for onward transport. Dominican criminal organizations serve as key transit facilitators and redistribution hubs within the Caribbean for illicit goods.

They origin from mainly Colombia and Venezuela, although drug routes from Ecuador towards Europe have become key. Costa Rica, Panama and Peru act as transit or exit points.

A notable exception was the No Limit Soldiers (NLS) from Curaçao, a Caribbean-born group that evolved into a transnational trafficking network, now largely dismantled. Meanwhile, in the South American Caribbean, figures such as Guyanese trafficker Shaheed “Roger” Khan, who trafficked tons of cocaine to the US and Europe, demonstrate how countries less renowned for drug trafficking can develop homegrown, transnational criminal operations.

At the regional level, brokers serve as highly influential, behind-the-scenes actors. These individuals coordinate shipments from South American suppliers to European buyers without physically handling the product. They negotiate deals, arrange transportation, and bribe officials to ensure safe passage. A prominent example is Serbian national, Nikola Boros, who oversaw a smuggling network in the Dominican Republic that used luxury yachts to move cocaine to the US and Europe, thereby avoiding

## THE ROLE OF BROKERS IN CRIMINAL NETWORKS



October 2025 | Source: Simplification of model described in Christian Leuprecht, Andrew Althouse and Olivier Walther, “The Puzzling Resilience of Transnational Organized Criminal Networks,” 3 July 2016; Anthea McCarthy-Jones, Caroline Doyle and Mark Turner, “From Hierarchies to Networks: The Organizational Evolution of the International Drug Trade,” 1 December 2020.

heightened scrutiny at cargo terminals. Thus, Western Balkan criminal networks act as international brokers and financiers, connecting producers at origin with European wholesale markets. They finance cocaine shipments, arrange maritime transport, and coordinate offloading in European ports. Their strength lies in logistical planning, financial capacity, and international connectivity, rather than territorial control.

At the foundation of this ecosystem are the South American DTOs that supply the product. Notable groups include Colombia’s National Liberation Front

(Ejército de Liberación Nacional – ELN), which manages coca fields and smuggling routes along the border with Venezuela. The Gaitanist Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia – AGC), also known as the “Gaitanistas” or “Gulf Clan,” also supplies vast quantities of cocaine for the European market, much of which transits through the Caribbean. Transshipment of cocaine via Venezuela is further facilitated by loose networks of corrupt Venezuelan military and state-embedded cells, collectively known as the Cartel of the Suns (Cartel de los Soles).

## KEY TRAFFICKING CORRIDORS

The trafficking of cocaine through the Caribbean broadly revolves around two smuggling corridors. The first involves transporting drugs through the Caribbean Sea, hopping between islands before reaching EU-relevant departure points. The second is to route shipments through Caribbean territories located on South America's east coast, which serves as a launchpad for cocaine shipments sent to Europe, either directly or via West Africa.

### CARIBBEAN ISLANDS

The Caribbean's many islands primarily serve as staging points for transnational cocaine shipments. With hundreds of islands to choose from, traffickers can make multiple stopovers to store, repackage, and consolidate cargo before reaching EU-bound departure points. The more complicated the route, the harder it is for authorities to anticipate where shipments might appear.

Within this landscape, individual islands play distinct roles. The Dominican Republic stands out as the region's most important transshipment hub. Its deep-water port of Caucedo, one of the busiest in the Caribbean, allows for high-volume shipments to be consolidated and sent along direct trade routes to major European gateways, including Rotterdam (Netherlands), Antwerp (Belgium), and Algeciras (Spain). The millions of cargo containers passing through Dominican ports annually provide ample cover for cocaine hidden within legitimate exports, impeding efforts to intercept flows.

Smaller islands, including French and Dutch territories such as Aruba, Curaçao,

Bonaire, and Sint Maarten/Saint-Martin, are also exploited by criminal groups. Their proximity to Venezuela exposes them to cocaine flows from South America, with speedboats and fishing vessels using short sea corridors to offload illicit cargo. Much of this cocaine travels to other Caribbean islands before being consolidated into larger shipments at EU departure points. Traffickers also leverage the islands' status as European overseas territories to bypass standard customs controls and move drugs directly to EU nations.

Other islands, such as Trinidad and Tobago, play a supporting rather than primary role in EU-bound trafficking. Located just 11 kilometers from the Venezuelan coast, the dual-island nation functions as a reception point for drugs and contraband moving through the Caribbean. While most cocaine shipments do not continue directly to Europe, drug smuggling through Trinidad and Tobago has fueled the rise of local gangs. These gangs collaborate with larger, transnational smuggling networks and, in doing so, help sustain the Caribbean's broader criminal ecosystem.

### SOUTH AMERICAN CARIBBEAN

Criminal networks also move cocaine through the South American Caribbean, consisting of Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana. This subregion's remote and sparsely patrolled terrain allows traffickers to move cocaine from Venezuela through dense rainforests, extensive river networks, and isolated coastal areas. Small private planes also leave Colombia and Venezuela laden with cocaine, landing on jungle airstrips before moving towards the coast. Access to the Atlantic Ocean also eliminates the need to transport drugs through the Caribbean Sea. This offers criminal groups a swift means of pivoting to alternative routes whenever island patrols intensify.

Ports such as Paramaribo in Suriname provide a direct path to Europe, although shipments often stop in Brazil or West Africa before reaching European markets. The air bridge between French Guiana and mainland France is also exploited to transport cocaine on commercial flights. Both Guyana and Suriname have housed artisanal shipyards reportedly used to build semi-submersible vessels, aboard which criminal groups increasingly attempt to send multi-ton cocaine loads directly to Europe.

### METHODS USED BY CRIMINAL NETWORKS

The Caribbean provides traffickers with an unusually broad array of smuggling options. Its commerce, tourism, and seafaring culture require diverse forms of transport, all of which can be exploited by criminal groups. The more methods available, the easier it is for traffickers to adapt when scrutiny increases on any one tactic.

- Cargo containers remain the most practical and cost-effective method for moving large volumes of cocaine to Europe. Traffickers target ports with the highest volume of container throughput and commercial ties to Europe. The Dominican Republic, with some of the busiest ports in the Caribbean, stands out as the most important transshipment and departure point for contaminated cargo. Cocaine is frequently hidden within legitimate goods such as foodstuffs and merchandise. But new tactics have also emerged; for example, dissolving cocaine into liquid to hide it among goods such as honey. The seizure of 9.8 tons of cocaine bound for Belgium at the port of Caucedo in January 2024 provided a stark reminder of the Dominican Republic's role as

a large-scale departure point for contaminated cargo.

- Go-fast boats are the workhorses for short-distance maritime transit, favored by traffickers for their speed and maneuverability. They are mainly used to transport cocaine from the coasts of Venezuela and Colombia to nearby islands, including Trinidad and Tobago, Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, and Sint Maarten/Saint-Martin. In the Dominican Republic, go-fast boats are also used to offload shipments on the high seas to other maritime vessels, with the loads later taken to the country's ports. Their limited range, however, confines their use to regional transit rather than transatlantic crossings.
- Criminal networks also use semi-submersible vessels and narco-submersibles to route shipments through the Caribbean or directly across the Atlantic. These low-profile, self-propelled vessels are difficult to detect, though semi-submersibles have nonetheless been discovered in waters near the Dominican Republic. In Venezuela, Guyana, and Suriname, authorities have identified clandestine shipyards used to build semi-submersibles for cross-Atlantic voyages. The use of these vessels for direct shipments to Europe is a fairly recent development. Previously, their range was limited to journeys within Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Fishing boats and inter-island transports also provide cover for cocaine shipments. Criminal groups prey on impoverished coastal communities to hide drugs aboard trawlers and ferries that move goods and people around the Caribbean. These slow-moving vessels, often

described as “island donkeys,” travel constantly between South America and Caribbean islands, sometimes transferring drug shipments at sea to confuse authorities. Fishing vessels, though limited in range, typically carry large fuel loads to sustain multiple legs.

- Yachts and other pleasure craft offer traffickers an additional, highly discreet method for moving cocaine. These vessels can blend in with legitimate maritime traffic and are used for both inter-island transport and transatlantic crossings, with evidence of shipments sent to Spain via countries like Trinidad and Tobago.
- Traffickers also target commercial aviation between the Caribbean and Europe to move cocaine. Human couriers, known as «mules,» transport small quantities by swallowing drugs or concealing them in luggage. This type of trafficking has been identified on direct flights from EU overseas territories like French Guiana to Paris, both of which fall under the same customs jurisdiction. Traffickers also use private jets or contaminated air cargo to send cocaine directly to Europe, though the quantities remain far smaller than those transported via maritime shipping lanes.

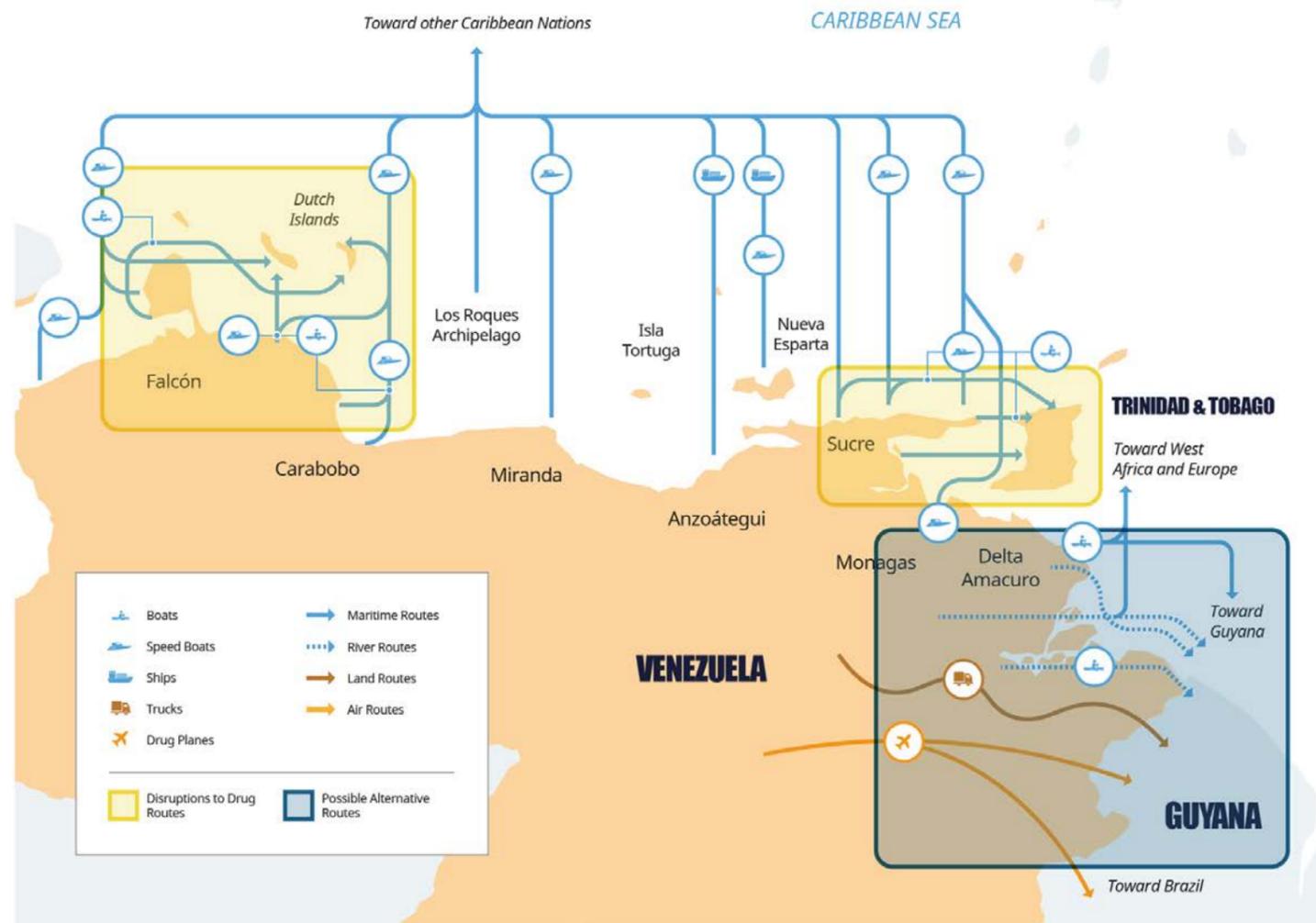
**DISRUPTIONS TO SMUGGLING ROUTES**

In September 2025, the United States deployed a naval flotilla to the southern Caribbean. The increased military presence has disrupted some trafficking routes, with targeted strikes on go-fast boats interrupting maritime channels between Venezuela’s northern coast and islands in the Dutch Caribbean, in addition to Trinidad and Tobago. Some traffickers in northern Venezuela have reportedly halted operations or fled heavily

**DISRUPTIONS TO DRUG TRAFFICKING ROUTES FROM NORTHERN VENEZUELA**

Since September 2025, intensified US naval patrols and airstrikes off Venezuela’s northern coast appear to be pushing some traffickers to consider alternative routes, though this shift remains unconfirmed.

December 2025 | Sources: In-person and remote interviews with sources in Venezuela, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago; InSight Crime investigations



patrolled zones. However, these disruptions may be temporary and criminal organizations may change routes towards Central America, Amazonia, Guyana and Suriname.

While some traffickers appear to be lying low and waiting for the US presence to decrease, others have taken a different approach by adapting their routes and methods. In some cases, cocaine is being rerouted via southern Venezuela to Guyana and Suriname using overland and aerial corridors that bypass the US presence in the Caribbean Sea. In Guyana, anti-drug authorities reported a sharp increase in drug flights from Venezuela, rising from 20–30 per month to approximately 70 in September and October 2025. New routes may include countries like Brazil, from where drug shipments can be sent directly to Europe or routed via West Africa.

Traffickers may also be shifting away from go-fast boats, which have been the primary targets of US strikes. They may, for instance, rely more on fishing vessels, containerized cargo, and lower-profile maritime vessels, such as semi-submersibles, though there is no concrete evidence yet to support this theory. In countries like Trinidad and Tobago and as far north as the Dominican Republic, narco jets sent from Venezuela have dropped cocaine into the ocean for near-shore maritime pick-up, reducing the need for drug-laden boats to make longer, potentially hazardous journeys.

# SPECIFIC SUB REGIONAL AND COUNTRY ANALYSIS

## DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The Dominican Republic is the Caribbean’s most important transshipment hub for cocaine bound for Europe, combining strategic geography with high-volume commercial infrastructure. The country sits squarely within one of the region’s busiest maritime trafficking corridors. Its deep-water ports, especially Caucedo – the fifth busiest in the Caribbean – move millions of containers each year and operate direct trade routes to major European gateways such as Rotterdam (Netherlands), Antwerp (Belgium), and Algeciras (Spain). As a result, the Dominican Republic often serves as a staging point for containers leaving Latin America, making it a critical chokepoint in the transatlantic drug trafficking chain.

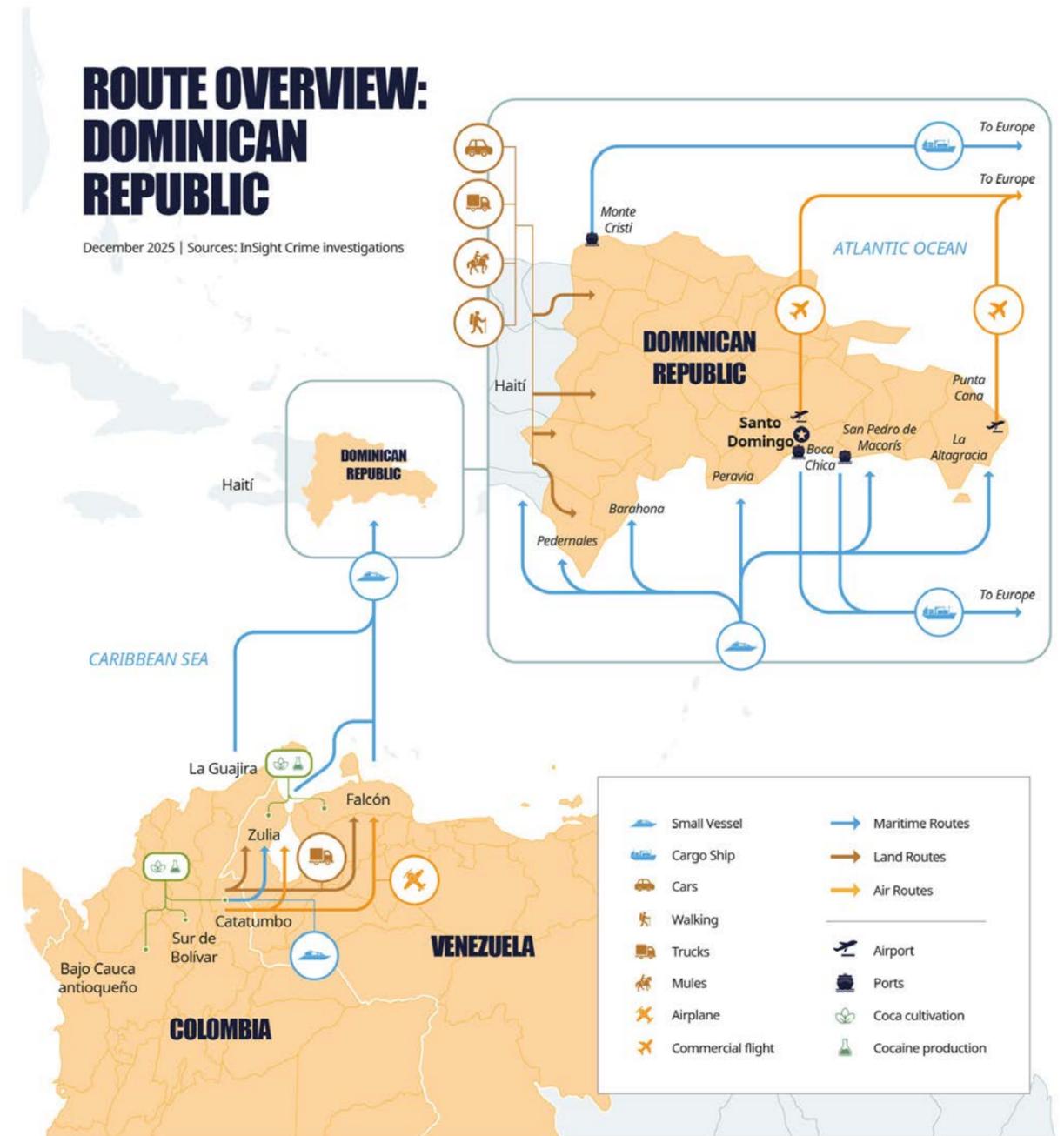
### ROUTES

#### ROUTES FROM SOUTH AMERICA TO THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

##### *Production Centers that Feed Routes to the Dominican Republic*

The drug trafficking chain begins in Colombia, where coca is harvested and processed into cocaine. The main crops and processing laboratories feeding this route are located in the Catatumbo region of Norte de Santander, along the border with Venezuela. Other cultivation and production zones, such as Bajo Cauca in Antioquia and southern Bolívar, also produce cocaine destined for Caribbean routes.

From these production areas, cocaine is transported by road to Colombia’s northern coast, primarily to beaches in La Guajira. From there, go-fast boats move drugs to the Dominican Republic. Alternatively, traffickers smuggle cocaine from Colombia into Venezuela via the



extensive, lightly patrolled border between the two countries. Once inside Venezuela, the drug shipments are transported to the states of Zulia, Apure, Amazonas, and Táchira using small riverboats, trucks, and private planes landing on clandestine airstrips. Traffickers then distribute shipments by land to other parts of the country.

The coastal states of Zulia and Falcón serve as launchpads for cocaine shipments sent to the Dominican Republic and other Caribbean islands, such as Aruba, Curaçao, and Bonaire. Zulia’s strategic appeal rests on its proximity to Colombia’s Catatumbo region and the river networks connecting the two countries, which flow into the Caribbean Sea via Lake Maracaibo. In

Falcón, drug shipments arriving in the state on land are driven to launch points on Venezuela’s northern coast, such as the Paraguaná Peninsula and the municipalities of Miranda, Píritu, Acosta, and José Laurencio Silva. Go-fast boats departing these locations typically head for islands in the northern Caribbean.

Most cocaine enters the Dominican Republic via the country’s southern coast, dropped off by go-fast boats. But many shipments arrive at commercial ports, hidden in cargo containers in transit through the country. These shipments often originate from Colombia, Peru, or Costa Rica.

In addition, semi-submersible vessels have been detected in Dominican waters. On September 12, 2024, the US Coast Guard and the UK Royal Navy intercepted a semi-submersible carrying two tons of cocaine 190 nautical miles south of the Dominican Republic. However, such seizures remain rare.

There is also a growing role of Haiti as a transshipment point for cocaine sent from Colombia to the Dominican Republic due to gang violence and fragile state situation. From Haiti, traffickers transport drugs into the Dominican Republic in private vehicles and trucks that pass through official border crossings. They also use civilians and animals, mainly donkeys and horses, to move cocaine in small quantities along makeshift paths that cross the land border between the two countries.

**ROUTES FROM THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC TO EUROPE**

Cocaine shipments destined for European markets usually arrive on the Dominican Republic’s southern coast, particularly in the provinces of Peravia, San Pedro de

Macorís, La Altagracia, Barahona, and La Romana. Recent cocaine seizures also point to the northern province of Pedernales, bordering Haiti, as an increasingly important arrival point for drugs sent in go-fast boats. Traffickers adapt their routes in response to law enforcement operations, moving shipments to less monitored areas when authorities increase seizures in a particular province.

The country’s southern provinces are attractive to traffickers for several reasons. For one, they are the closest Dominican territories to cocaine transit points on the Colombian and Venezuelan coasts. The provinces also boast lengthy stretches of coastline with limited state presence, and they are connected by highways to Santo Domingo – the country’s capital and principal port.

Drugs are then divided among several vehicles and driven to Santo Domingo, often concealed in hidden compartments.

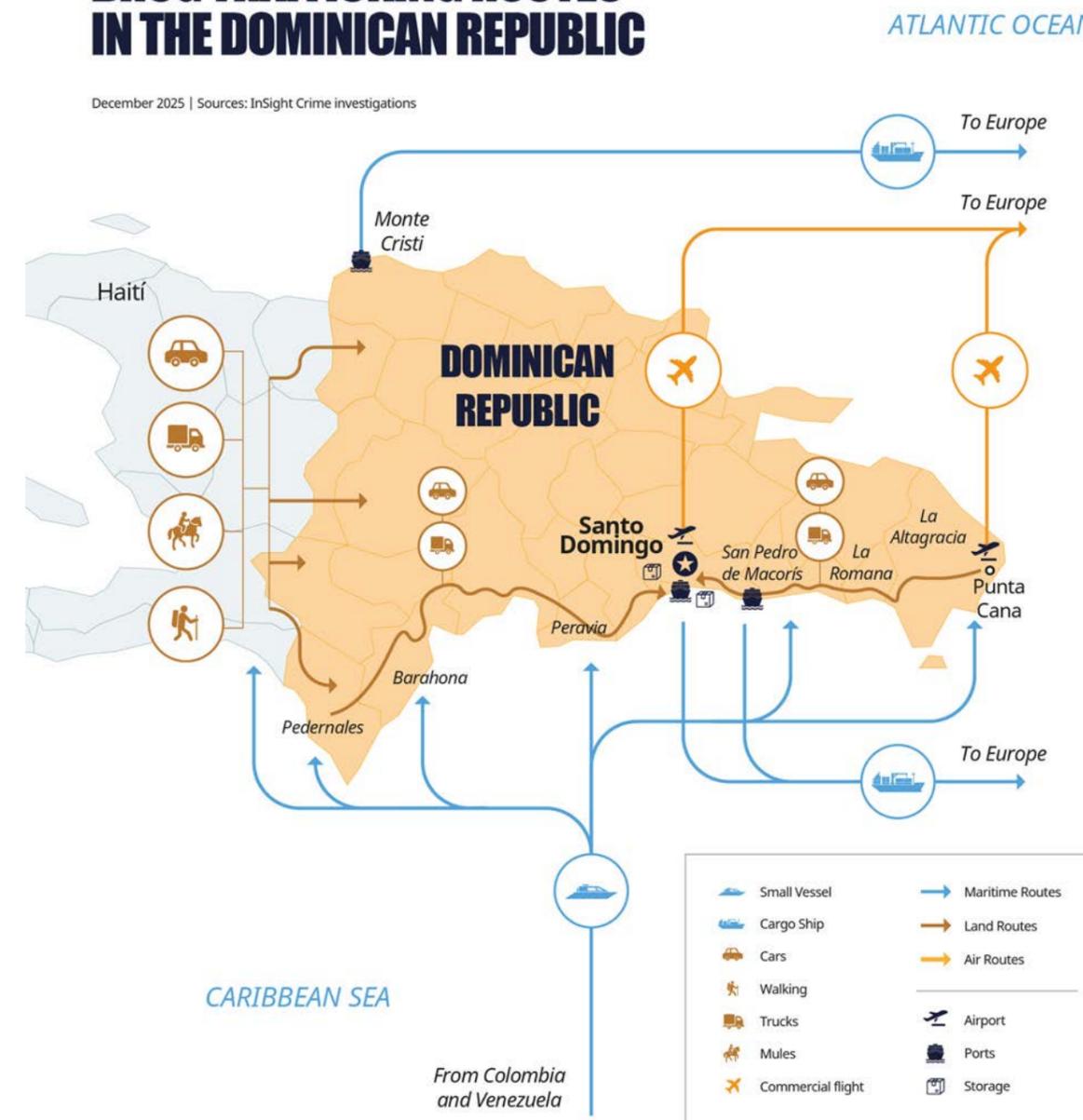
**Maritime Departure Points from the Dominican Republic**

Ports in Santo Domingo represent the main launchpad for cocaine shipments bound for international markets. The province houses the country’s two largest cargo terminals, Caucedo and Río Haina. Authorities seize more cocaine in Santo Domingo than anywhere else in the country, a reflection of the ports’ importance in drug transshipment. In 2024, authorities seized 19.6 tons of cocaine in the province, well over half the national tally.

Criminal networks have also started to exploit the Manzanillo port in Monte Cristi, bordering Haiti. Traffickers target agricultural export routes connecting Manzanillo to European countries. In February 2025, authorities at the port seized 30 kilograms of cocaine hidden in

**DRUG TRAFFICKING ROUTES IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

December 2025 | Sources: InSight Crime investigations



a shipment of ceramic bananas bound for the Netherlands. In September 2024, authorities discovered 201 cocaine bricks inside a shipment of lemons destined for Rotterdam.

Of these ports, Caucedo is heavily favored by traffickers because it offers multiple shipping lines to Europe. In addition, the port is highly efficient at moving high

volumes of cargo, with the need for quick turnarounds sometimes reducing the intensity of container checks.

Traffickers sometimes contaminate containers abroad, making Dominican ports mere transit points. For example, authorities seized 2.2 tons of cocaine in November 2024 in a container that originated in Panama and was bound

for Belgium. But tampering also occurs inside the Dominican Republic. Often, this happens when containers are en route to ports after being inspected and sealed by the country's National Drug Control Directorate (DNCD). Following security inspections, criminal groups break the seals to contaminate cargo in transit. Traffickers tend to target established exporters that operate an array of international routes.

Drug networks also contaminate cargo within port facilities. They recruit or bribe port workers – in particular crane operators and yard staff – to conceal drugs or turn a blind eye while contamination occurs.

#### *Cocaine Trafficking via Airports in the Dominican Republic*

In addition to cargo terminals, airports in the Dominican Republic also serve as exit points for cocaine shipments bound for Europe, albeit in far smaller quantities.

Two Dominican airports operate direct commercial flights to Europe: Las Americas International Airport (AILA), in Santo Domingo, and Punta Cana International Airport. AILA offers direct flights to Madrid and Paris, while Punta Cana operates tourist flights to Spain, France, Germany, and the UK, among other destinations. Traffickers recruit human couriers, known as “mules,” to transport drugs along these routes, luring them with the promise of money and European visas. Madrid is a common destination for human couriers sent from the Dominican Republic, though authorities have also arrested French citizens transporting minor quantities of cocaine from Santo Domingo to Paris.

Private jets also play a role. In 2024, for instance, Spanish authorities dismantled a transnational criminal organization that used private aircraft registered in South Africa to smuggle cocaine from the Dominican Republic to Europe.

### RECEPTION POINTS IN EUROPE

The main entry points for cocaine shipped from the Dominican Republic to Europe are the ports of Algeciras in Spain, Rotterdam in the Netherlands, and Antwerp in Belgium. More recently, authorities have intercepted shipments bound for Britain at ports such as Portsmouth.

Once cocaine reaches Europe, local criminal networks handle extraction from ports. These networks may include Dominican nationals. Authorities in Spain, which has a large Dominican diaspora, have dismantled trafficking networks made up of Dominicans, Colombians, and Venezuelans who collected cocaine shipments before handing them over to European distributors. Italian authorities have also arrested Dominicans on suspicion of importing cocaine from the Dominican Republic to Italy.

### CRIMINAL NETWORKS WORKING IN AND THROUGH THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

*Organized crime in the Dominican Republic is defined by its flexibility and dynamism. The country's criminal landscape is composed of small, agile networks. Geography plays a central role in this design.*

Although Dominican criminal networks are specialized in drug trafficking, mainly cocaine and marijuana, they also traffic migrants from the Dominican Republic to Europe, particularly to Spain and France. In 2023, French authorities broke up a group that was sexually exploiting Colombian, Venezuelan, and Dominican women after luring them with false job offers in Europe.

The Dominican Republic has also seen an increase in money laundering linked to criminal activities. Its tourism offerings, a booming real estate sector, robust and sustained economic growth, and sea and air connections to Europe, the United States, and Latin America have contributed to the growth of money laundering within the country by both international and local brokers, as well as larger criminal networks.

### DOMINICAN NETWORKS

Unlike many Latin American countries, the Dominican Republic does not have large, hierarchical criminal organizations or street gangs with capacities to lead international trafficking of illicit goods. Instead, organized crime in the country is fluid, transactional, and discreet, making it harder to detect and less visibly violent, yet deeply entrenched. These groups work on a contract basis rather than functioning as permanent organizations. Individuals are typically hired by local bosses, or “capos,” for specific shipments, with personnel often changing from one operation to the next. This structure highlights the fluid and decentralized nature of Dominican trafficking networks.

Local capos control specific entry points for cocaine arriving on go-fast boats from Colombia. One network may oversee shipments landing in Peravia, another in Pedernales, and others in Boca Chica or La Romana. Despite these territorial divisions, rivalries among local capos rarely turn violent.

For drugs crossing by land from Haiti, the shipments are typically managed by Dominican nationals who know the terrain and the safest crossing points, rather than an established criminal network. For example, in January 2025, Dominican

authorities captured four Dominicans and two Haitians transporting 775 kilograms of cocaine off the coast of Pedernales, near the border with Haiti.

For drugs moving towards the US, there tend to be different players, with close cooperation between Dominican and Puerto Rican traffickers. Given the proximity of the two islands, one of the most common transshipment routes runs from the eastern coast of the Dominican Republic to Puerto Rico across the Mona Channel.

### MAJOR FOREIGN ACTORS

Colombian and Venezuelan traffickers play a key role in transporting drugs from South America to the Dominican Republic. Both countries are the main suppliers of cocaine to the island, and Colombian, Venezuelan, and Dominican nationals are frequently arrested together. However, the role of Colombian and Venezuelan traffickers is largely individual or independent, rather than tied to major criminal organizations from their home countries. They mainly act as brokers.

Numerous local traffickers in the Dominican Republic operate within broader international networks, playing limited but essential roles in the cocaine supply chain. In September 2025, Dominican authorities arrested Soni Pepa, alias “Vilson Pepa,” in connection with an 11-ton cocaine shipment, of which 600 kilograms were seized in Rotterdam. Pepa allegedly coordinated shipments that passed through ports in several countries, including the Dominican Republic. The seized load departed from the port of Villeta in Paraguay and was destined for Antwerp.

Another case involves Serbian national Nikola Boros, alias “Antun Mrdeza,” who was previously detained in Colombia on drug trafficking charges. Boros oversaw a vast cocaine trafficking network that moved drugs from Colombia to Europe and the United States, using the Dominican Republic as a key waypoint.

His network was notable for its use of speedboats and luxury yachts departing from marinas in the eastern provinces of the Dominican Republic, areas that tend to receive less scrutiny than commercial shipping ports. However, in April 2025, authorities seized a shipment of 993 packages of cocaine that Boros allegedly supervised. The drugs were found on a boat docked at a tourist pier in La Altagracia province.

Boros represents the essence of the modern broker: a transnational operator who travels directly to South America to negotiate shipments and, in transshipment points like the Dominican Republic, avoids direct management while relying on local support cells to move the drugs.

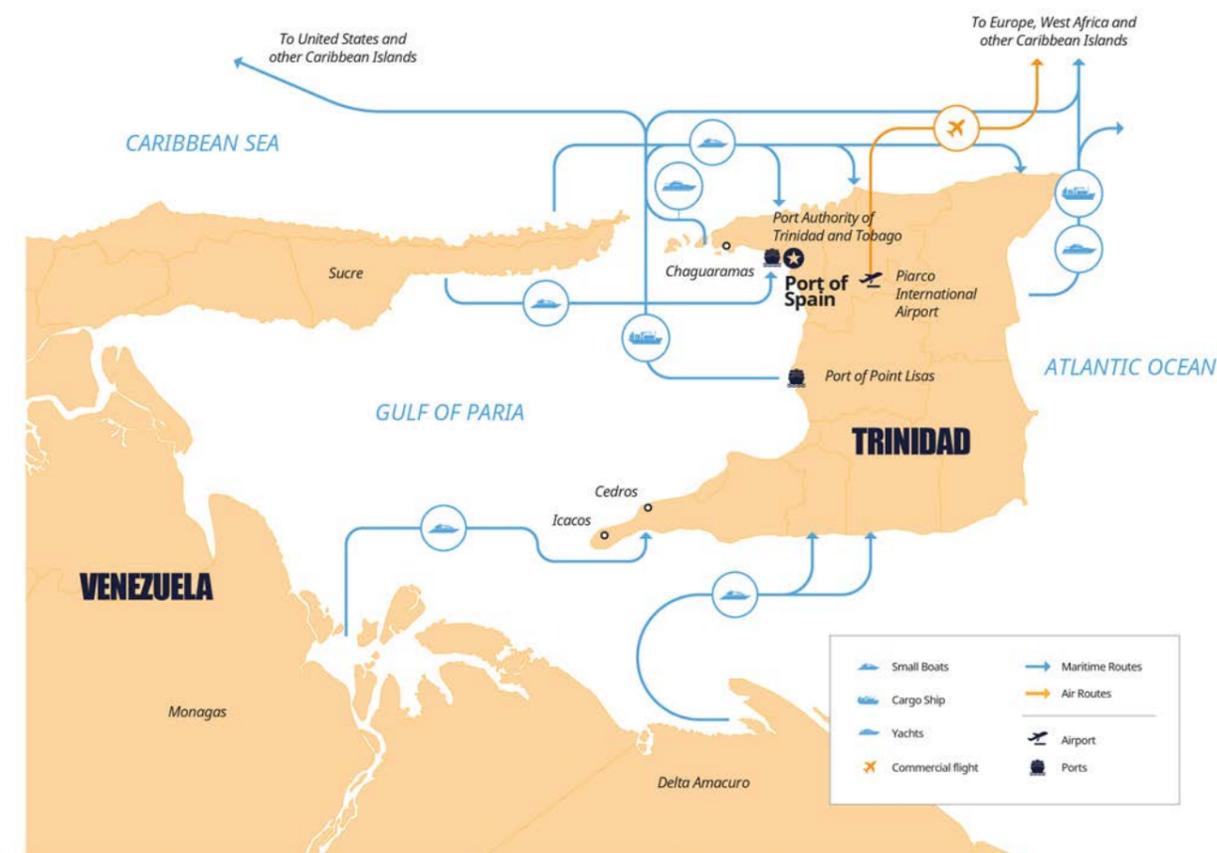
## TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Trinidad and Tobago has one of the Caribbean’s most complex criminal landscapes. Though it is not a major transshipment point for cocaine bound for Europe, the country faces some of the region’s most severe gang-related violence. It has 45,7 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in 2024 according to InSight Crime, one of the fifth highest in the entire region. Its proximity to Venezuela – just 11 kilometers across the sea – places it squarely in the path of South American drugs and contraband moving toward international markets. The widespread availability of drugs and firearms has fueled the rise of hyperviolent local gangs, many of which have gained enough power to collaborate with white-collar criminal elites and transnational organized crime groups. This mix of local and international actors has created a deeply entrenched and highly interconnected criminal ecosystem, helping to sustain regional crime networks and leaving the dual-island nation perpetually vulnerable to cocaine flows.

The seizures numbers suggest the country is not a major transshipment point compared to Caribbean nations like the Dominican Republic. What’s more, cocaine seized in route to Europe or on European soil is rarely traced back to Trinidad and Tobago – another indication that traffickers are not heavily using the dual-island nation as a transit point for EU-bound shipments.

## COCAINE SMUGGLING ROUTES IN TRINIDAD

December 2025 | Source: InSight Crime investigations between 2023 and 2025



### ROUTES

#### ROUTES FROM SOUTH AMERICA TO TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Trinidad and Tobago is the closest Caribbean island to Venezuela, and its role in the international drug trade is intimately linked to the nearby South American nation. For decades, illicit drugs, firearms, and all manner of contraband have skipped back and forth between the narrow strait that separates it from the South American mainland. The short travel time provides authorities with minimal

time to intercept any contraband. Much of the contraband moving between the two countries – such as alcohol, weapons, marijuana, and medicine – is destined for local consumption. In the case of cocaine, however, shipments rarely remain in Trinidad and Tobago. Rather, drugs are usually stored, repackaged, and sent to another Caribbean nation before reaching their final destination.

The movement of illicit goods between Venezuela and Trinidad relies primarily on small vessels, which can take less than twenty minutes to cross. Go-fast boats are

# SUCRE: KEY ROUTE FOR DRUG TRAFFICKING FROM VENEZUELA

September 2025 | Source: Interviews with sources in Venezuela and press reports



the primary vessels, chosen for speed and ability to evade coast guard patrols. Fishing boats and small craft, often described as “island donkeys,” though slower, are also used as these vessels flit constantly between the mainland and Caribbean islands. These boats typically carry large fuel loads to sustain multiple legs.

Shipments typically land on isolated or less-patrolled beaches and secluded coastal areas in southwest Trinidad or around quiet coves and bays. Less monitored ports or informal docking spots are also used.

Key offloading points in Trinidad include the island’s southwestern peninsula, near Icacos and Cedros. This area is known for its rural terrain, vast coconut estates, and distance from populated areas. Shipments sent to the southern coast typically originate from Venezuelan regions such

as Delta Amacuro, Pedernales, Guiria and Tucupita. Traffickers also shuttle shipments across the Gulf of Paria, reaching beaches on Trinidad’s western coast. The secluded nature of these sites allows traffickers to unload drugs quickly and disperse them into waiting vehicles or surrounding forests before authorities have time to react.

Traffickers also move drugs in small planes, departing Venezuela and Colombia, which make offshore or near-shore drop-offs that are then collected by maritime craft.

## ROUTES FROM TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO TO EUROPE

Once cocaine shipments arrive in Trinidad and Tobago, local drug networks transport them from secure landing spots to stash houses, remote storage facilities, or safe houses before being exported onward to

markets. Drugs may be hidden close to landing points or immediately transported in vehicles. Temporary storage locations include Chacachacare Island, with its isolated and bushy terrain. Traffickers also use Icacos, the Galfa Point area in Erin, and other illegal access points near Siparia.

Once staged, the cocaine is moved internationally using different methods. Traffickers can exploit Trinidad and Tobago’s commercial shipping network to move cocaine across the Atlantic. Vessels passing through the county’s ports travel to destinations in EU ports in the Netherlands, Spain, and France – though these routes are often indirect.

Containers passing through Trinidad and Tobago are frequently contaminated in other countries. Vessels stopping in Trinidad and Tobago often originate from ports in South America, such as Callao in Peru and ports in Colombia. Nevertheless, contamination also occurs within Trinidad’s ports. Traffickers may conceal drugs inside legitimate cargo, including inside refrigerated containers carrying fruit and within hidden compartments. Other methods may include hiding items in hollowed-out frames of crates, pipes, or appliances like washing machines.

Criminal networks also employ the well-known “rip-on/rip-off” method to break open containers inside terminal yards, load drugs, and reseal them with falsified seals. This method invariably requires collusion with port staff. Alternatively, small boats operating from Trinidad’s eastern coast may transport drugs 20–30 miles out to meet freighters on the Atlantic.

Private vessels also provide traffickers with opportunities to move drugs across the Atlantic. One notable seizure in July 2025 involved Spanish authorities intercepting a

yacht carrying 1.6 tons of cocaine that had been moored in Chaguamas, northwestern Trinidad, before making its final Atlantic crossing preparations. Alternatively, yachts may depart Trinidad before meeting other drug-laden vessels around 10–50 miles offshore. Once loaded, smugglers can take their time to stash the product during the weeks-long Atlantic crossing. Overnight rendezvous or offshore drop zones may be used to minimize exposure.

Most shipments do not go directly to Europe. They usually make one or more stop-offs in the Caribbean (Barbados, Martinique, Saint Lucia, and others) or West Africa, where drugs might be repackaged, consolidated, or routed through additional smuggling channels. Shipments also move through other Caribbean hubs, such as the Dominican Republic or Haiti, before beginning the transatlantic leg. This strategy is designed to bamboozle authorities by reducing the risk associated with a direct, single-stage shipment.

Cocaine is also trafficked by air from Trinidad and Tobago to Europe, albeit on a much smaller scale than via maritime routes. Cocaine is typically transported by human couriers who hide or ingest small quantities of the drug before boarding passenger flights to destinations such as Germany and the UK. Private airplanes traveling between Trinidad and Europe sometimes carry cocaine in concealed compartments.

## CRIMINAL NETWORKS

Drug smuggling in Trinidad and Tobago is orchestrated by a hierarchy ranging from powerful elites who finance and coordinate the transnational shipments to local gangs and transport networks handling ground logistics.

There are some established, loosely structured trafficking networks in the country. These groups frequently change membership and alliances, often operating under the direction of powerful but discrete white-collar criminals.

Wealthy, well-connected economic elites – known colloquially as “Big Fish” – occupy the uppermost tier of Trinidad and Tobago’s trafficking hierarchy. These actors fund, coordinate, and profit from the transnational flow of drugs while remaining largely insulated. They are financiers of the trade rather than direct participants, channeling resources into large shipments and brokering deals between local facilitators and foreign suppliers. They oversee the logistics chain from a distance – coordinating maritime shipments through commercial ports or private yachts – while outsourcing the risky, street-level tasks to local gangs. This separation between financiers and foot soldiers makes it nearly impossible for law enforcement to trace cocaine consignments back to their true architects.

**LOCAL GANGS**

Street gangs and local drug transportation networks form the operational backbone of cocaine trafficking in Trinidad and Tobago, managing on-the-ground movement of illicit goods. While senior financiers manage the capital and external partnerships, it is gangs and independent logistics networks who receive, store, and protect cocaine consignments arriving from Venezuela. These groups control key smuggling entry points along the southwestern coast – particularly Cedros and Icacos. Once landed, the cocaine is hidden in stash houses or rural storage facilities until it is ready for export, with local gangs often paid in product rather than cash, feeding the domestic market

and reinforcing their territorial control.

Beyond their logistical role, these gangs operate as integral components of a wider criminal ecosystem. They engage in multiple illicit economies – arms trafficking, extortion, contract killings, and marijuana sales – that sustain their influence across urban hubs like Port of Spain.

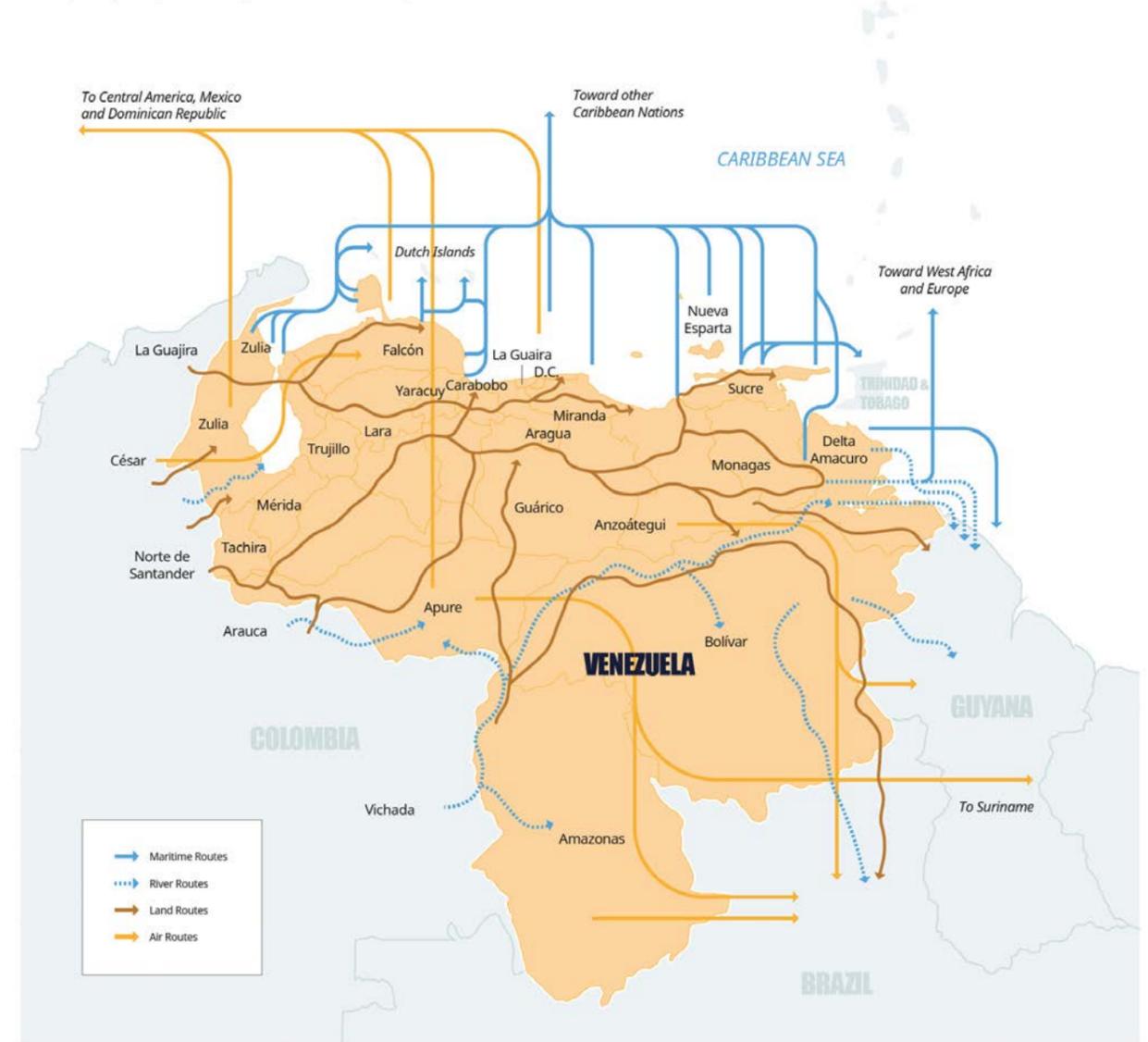
**VENEZUELAN ACTORS**

Major Venezuelan criminal organizations, independent trafficking groups, and sometimes armed groups are involved in drug trafficking via Trinidad and Tobago. They generally control production and initial export from Venezuela. They also participate in human smuggling and human trafficking, charging substantial fees to transport Venezuelan nationals into Trinidad and sometimes engaging in sex and labor trafficking.

The interaction between Venezuelan actors and local gangs is complex, involving both collaboration and competition. Venezuelan groups send emissaries to coordinate logistics with Trinidadian gangs, providing loads, negotiating arrangements, and ensuring secure handovers, while local gangs manage reception, storage, and onward distribution. At the same time, Venezuelan actors compete for space in the criminal market, with some Venezuelan nationals reportedly subcontracted to carry out murders, armed robberies, or other illicit activities for local gangs.

**COCAINE TRAFFICKING ROUTES IN VENEZUELA**

January 2026 | Source: InSight Crime interviews and open sources



**VENEZUELA**

Venezuela’s proximity to Colombia, particularly the coca-rich region of Catatumbo, has long made it a major cocaine transit country. Much of the cocaine that leaves the country is first sent to Caribbean islands or the South American Caribbean, rather than directly

to consumer markets in Europe or the United States. The deluge of cocaine departing Venezuela has been spurred on by widespread corruption, with Venezuelan state officials – such as security forces, port authorities, and politicians – participating in and allowing drug trafficking to flourish. State complicity has also allowed some of Colombia’s most powerful DTOs to gain

a foothold in Venezuela, some of which enjoy unfettered access to drug routes and have even started to experiment with coca cultivation on Venezuelan soil. In September 2025, the United States significantly increased its naval presence in waters off Venezuela's northern coast. US warships and drones have been used to strike small vessels traveling along well-established drug-smuggling routes. On 3 January 2026, the United States launched Operation Absolute Resolve to capture Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores. These operations appear to have rattled traffickers in certain parts of Venezuela, shutting down some Caribbean routes and forcing traffickers to adapt to fluid conditions.

## ROUTES

### KEY TRANSIT POINTS

Cocaine typically arrives to Venezuela through the country's four states bordering Colombia: Zulia, Tachira, Apure, and Amazonas. However, drug trafficking routes run through many of the country's 23 states. Both Zulia, across the border from Colombia's coca-rich Catatumbo territory, and its neighboring state, Falcón, are central to Venezuelan drug trafficking operations.

#### Zulia

Cocaine arrives in Zulia via land routes from Colombia, specifically through the southwestern municipality of Jesús María Semprún, or through Alta Guajira, in the municipality of Guajira. Alternative routes include through the Catatumbo River, which runs from Colombia up into the south of Lake Maracaibo, or via plane into clandestine airstrips littered throughout the state.

A wealth of clandestine airstrips and the presence of Lake Maracaibo allow drugs to be sent to the nearby islands of Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao, or to Caribbean islands further north. Leaks from the Mexican Ministry of Defense showed 70 alerts of drug flights landing in Belize in 2020 and 2021, all originating at airstrips near Maracaibo in Zulia, although it is unclear how active this air bridge currently is.

#### Falcón

While some cocaine is exported directly from Zulia, significant quantities are sent for dispatch from either the east of the country or from the neighboring state of Falcón. The primary dispatch points for small boats sent from Falcón are in the Paraguaná Peninsula or from transshipment points across the eastern side of the state's coast, such as Boca de Hueque and Sabanas Altas in the municipality of Píritu; Aguide, in Acosta; and Tucacas, in José Laurencio Silva. The small village of Río Seco in the municipality of Miranda, Falcón, also operates as a drug trafficking hub.

Go-fast boats are most commonly used, along with fishing boats. Occasionally, semi-submersible vessels are also employed. Drugs are sometimes left in the sea with a GPS and are later picked up by another vessel, which will transfer the load to a ship traveling to Europe. The primary destinations for small boats sent from Falcón are Aruba and Curaçao, or to Bonaire.

Clandestine airstrips are present in the municipalities of Federación, Petit, Miranda, and Mauroa (all Falcón). Flights have traditionally been destined for Central America and Mexico, although it is unclear how active this air route currently is aimed US operations.

#### Sucre

Sucre, in the east of the country, is also key to trafficking, with drugs brought via land to the municipalities of Arismendi (specifically to the transshipment points San Juan de las Galdonas, San Juan de Unare, and El Morro de Puerto Santo), Mariño (Irapa), and Valdez with the help of local gangs. From there, cocaine is dispatched by sea, primarily aboard fishing boats to nearby Trinidad and Tobago, though also to Grenada. Although remnants of gangs associated with Tren de Aragua maintain a presence in the region, control of drug trafficking remains with state forces.

#### Delta Amacuro & Bolívar

Drugs arrive to the coastal state of Delta Amacuro from the River Orinoco, which runs from Venezuela's border with Colombia, passing along the borders of the states of Amazonas and Bolívar before reaching Delta Amacuro. Traffickers dispatch cocaine aboard boats to nearby Trinidad and Tobago or eastward to Guyana. Additionally, clandestine shipyards for building semi-submersible vessels have been discovered in Delta Amacuro since at least 2009.

River routes connect both Delta Amacuro and the state of Bolívar to neighboring Guyana. Guyana has seen an increase in the seizure of cocaine coming from Venezuela, including a record 4.4 tons seized in August 2024. The increase of more than 50% – from 20-30 drug flights per month to approximately 70 – in small aircraft transporting drugs from Venezuela in one year, suggests that the country may play a larger role as a cocaine transit point for drugs arriving from Venezuela than previously suspected.

Semi-submersible vessels are now capable of transporting drugs across the Atlantic. The first such vessel found in Europe, off the coast of Spain in 2019, is believed to have been built in Guyana, and in March 2024, US officials seized 2.4 tons of cocaine from a semi-submersible vessel 150 miles from Guyana that was headed toward Spain.

#### Apure

Sparsely populated areas have for decades served as airstrip sites for drug flights sent to Central America. While Central America has seen clandestine flight numbers drop in recent years, the Venezuelan military continues to shoot down unauthorized flights within Apure. Additionally, multiple cocaine production camps have been discovered in the state in 2025, suggesting it still holds a place on drug trafficking routes.

Clandestine airstrips in Apure also serve flights going to Suriname, and airstrips in both Apure and Amazonas serve flights bound for Brazil, from where drugs are typically sent on to Europe or West Africa.

## CRIMINAL NETWORKS

### CARTEL OF THE SUNS (CARTEL DE LOS SOLES)

Venezuela's government's highest-ranking officials, are dependent on the military and police for their continued rule but are unable to pay them decent salaries, allow military and police officials to enrich themselves from drug trafficking profits in a system known as the Cartel of the Suns.

Depending on routes, traffickers may pay police and military officials to either turn a blind eye to their trafficking or to transport drugs themselves through ports and airports. The lack of coordination

between military-embedded trafficking networks and internal conflicts within state agencies means that security forces have occasionally targeted, purposely or unintentionally, drug trafficking operations aligned with other state forces.

**NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY (EJÉRCITO NACIONAL DE LIBERACIÓN - ELN)**

Independent drug traffickers have long paid guerrilla groups operating along the border region in exchange for being able to cross into Venezuela, pass through drug trafficking corridors, and use clandestine airstrips. But some guerrillas have become directly involved, taking over the production, transport, and sale of cocaine.

The ELN has achieved an increasing level of dominance along the Venezuelan border, with the approval and possibly aid of state officials. Local NGOs calculate that around 60% of their 6450 members are located in the border between Colombia and Venezuela. The ELN provides a layer of security to the Chavista regime, acting as a paramilitary force enforcing the regime's will and acting as an extra deterrent against the potential threat of invasion from across the Colombian border.

However, the military's previous efforts at pushing the 10th Front FARC dissidents out of Apure worked to the advantage of the ELN. The ELN more recently entered into a conflict with the Second Marquetalia faction of the FARC dissidents within Venezuela.

The government has also highlighted operations against camps that officials said belonged to FARC dissidents or the ELN. Especially in the case of the ELN, these supposed operations likely reflect a desire to show a tough-on-drugs approach, due

to pressure from Colombia and the United States, as opposed to a serious attempt to tackle organized crime.

**INDEPENDENT TRAFFICKERS AND BROKERS**

Independent drug traffickers or smaller drug trafficking networks pay armed groups such as the ELN and military officials to transport narcotics along routes in territories they control. Although security forces, as well as the ELN and FARC dissidents, have become more controlling of Venezuela's criminal economies, some smaller drug trafficking organizations have emerged in recent years, such as the Sabana Alta Cartel and the Thompson-Camacaro, which have sprung in Falcón in wake of the Paraguaná Cartel's demise.

The La Guajira Cartel has seen its power greatly reduced with the ELN consolidating control in northwestern Zulia.

Gangs such as Tren de Aragua and Tren del Llano formerly charged traffickers for passage through states where they were present, particularly Aragua and Guárico, respectively. However, repeated security force operations have seen both groups lose a significant amount of power and relevance within Venezuela's criminal landscape.

There is also a fluid network of narco-brokers, with brokers who have ties to Venezuelan state officials operating from the Caribbean, particularly the Dominican Republic.

# VENEZUELAN MILITARY TRAFFICKING NETWORKS



**Collecting trafficking "taxes"**

Trafficking networks make regular payments to local military units to be allowed to operate with impunity, for example by not intervening in the operations of clandestine airstrips, or cocaine laboratories.



**Creating movement corridors**

Trafficking networks pay off military units to guarantee safe passage of drug shipments through certain territories. This can include collecting payments at roadside checkpoints, ensuring that authorized clandestine drug flights are allowed to move through Venezuelan airspace, or by ensuring maritime patrols are not conducted at certain times to allow drug boats to pass.



**Transporting drugs**

Along certain trafficking routes, military units transport drugs themselves using military vehicles, especially along internal corridors linking the border region to dispatch points by road.



**Controlling trafficking infrastructure**

Military control of infrastructure used for dispatching drugs, above all ports and airports, can mean drug exports are organized directly by military officials stationed in these areas. These officials coordinate operations by paying other officials or workers in positions where they can ensure drugs pass through security checks and are safely loaded.

January 2022 | Source: InSight Crime Investigations

## EU OVERSEAS TERRITORIES: DUTCH AND FRENCH ISLANDS

Caribbean cocaine trafficking is structured around multi-stage routes that exploit the region’s archipelagic geography, jurisdictional fragmentation and extensive commercial and passenger connectivity. Within this system, the Lesser Antilles function as a critical feeder and consolidation space, linking South American supply zones with onward departure points to Europe and to a lesser extent, the United States. Traffickers rely on short maritime hops, temporary storage, repackaging and redistribution across multiple islands to reduce detection risk and complicate interdiction.

The islands of Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Sint Maarten/Saint-Martin occupy a particularly vulnerable position in the transatlantic cocaine trade. As overseas territories of the Netherlands and France, these territories grant traffickers access to European markets without the hassle of customs checkpoints. Their proximity to Venezuela places them in the middle of established maritime and land smuggling routes, with speedboats and fishing vessels exploiting short sea corridors to offload illicit cargo. A thriving tourism industry provides cover for concealment and transshipment. In addition, longstanding family, cultural, and legal ties to mainland Europe facilitate trust-based networks that traffickers harness for logistics and distribution within Europe.

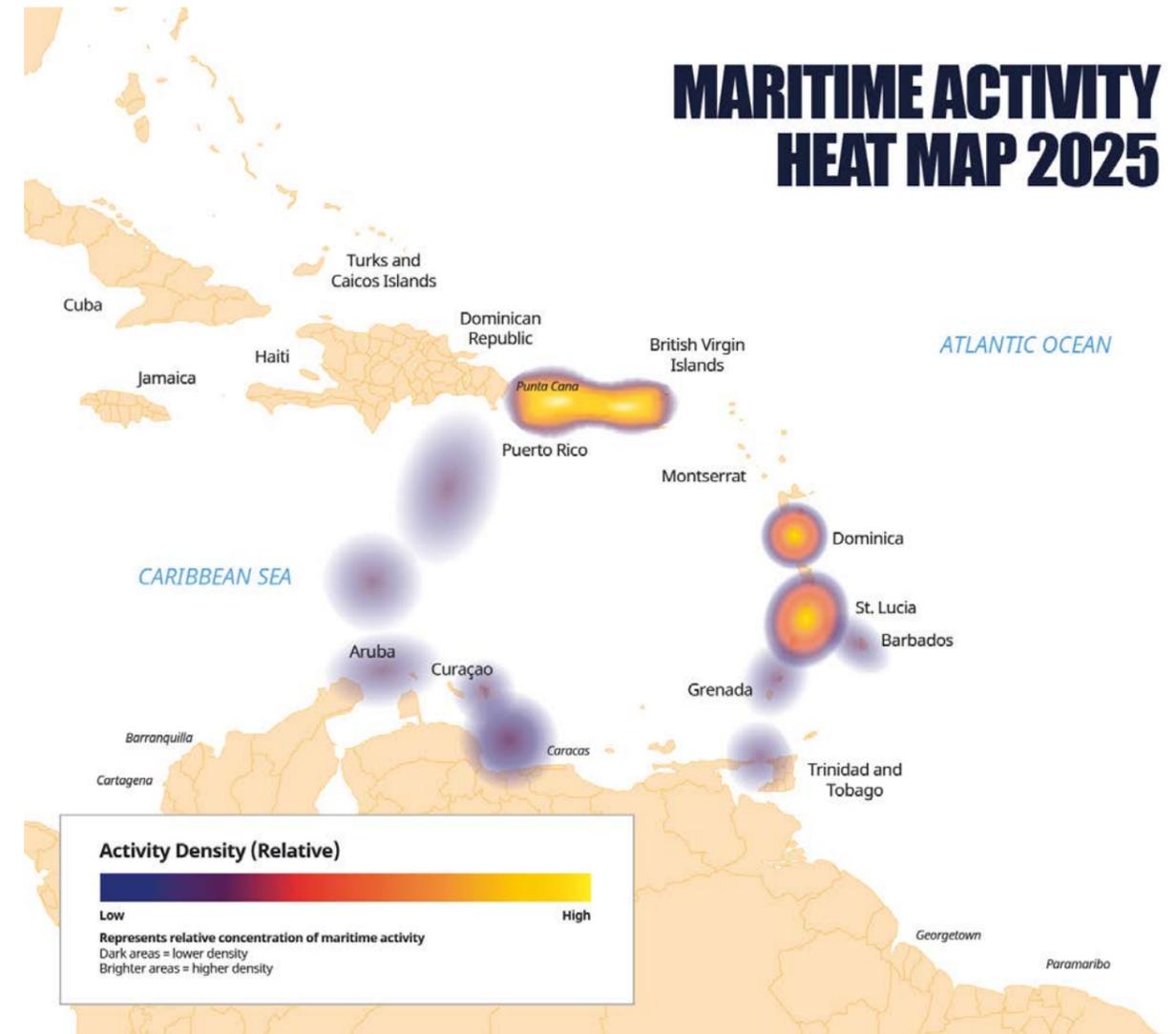
### ROUTES

#### ROUTES FROM SOUTH AMERICA TO EU OVERSEAS TERRITORIES

##### *Eastern Caribbean to Martinique, Guadeloupe and the British Virgin Islands*

The eastern Caribbean chain including Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia and Dominica serve as a principal reception and transit area for cocaine entering from South America. Seizure patterns during 2025 reflect sustained activity across this corridor. Saint Lucia reported seizures totalling 585 kg of cocaine between January and October 2025, alongside large cannabis-resin seizures, indicating persistent interdiction pressure. Dominica recorded a major interdiction reported at 1,730 kg of cocaine in October 2025, described as the country’s largest seizure, reinforcing the continued use of the island chain for high-volume movements. In addition, 2025 maritime seizure datasets capture recurring drug-related incidents and preparatory trafficking indicators in and around Saint Lucia and Dominica, consistent with continued staging, handoff and relay activity within the central Lesser Antilles.

Martinique and Guadeloupe function as high-value onward gateways, benefiting from frequent commercial air connections and maritime links to mainland France and European logistic hubs. Interdictions linked to this corridor demonstrate its continued exploitation. A 2.7-tonne cocaine seizure at the French port of Le Havre in March 2024 was reported as originating from Guadeloupe, illustrating how the French Antilles can be used to inject cocaine into French/European commercial logistics. French counter-narcotics operations also continue to record multi-tonne maritime cases in the operational space associated



with the French Antilles, including a French operation reporting 9 tonnes of cocaine seized with suspects brought before a magistrate in Fort-de-France, Martinique. This pattern is consistent with the ongoing use of maritime freight and air passenger channels as complementary methods for moving cocaine onward into mainland France and wider Europe.

The British Virgin Islands also feature in regional trafficking dynamics as a routing and concealment space for movements toward the United States and Europe. In December 2025, authorities reported the seizure of 772.4 kg of cocaine in Virgin Islands waters with multiple arrests,

reflecting the continued utility of the territory within the northeastern Caribbean trafficking environment. Separately, U.S. CBP Air and Marine Operations reported participation in an international maritime interdiction and seizure of 1,440 kg of cocaine in the BVI area in June 2025, underscoring the corridor’s relevance to U.S.-linked maritime interdiction activity.

##### *Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao*

Cocaine arrives to the islands of Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao (ABC), and Sint Maarten predominantly from Colombia and Venezuela via land and sea routes. As the ABC islands are around 35-50 miles (56 to

# FALCÓN AND ITS DRUGS DEPARTURES

May 2025 | Sources: InSight Crime investigations



80 kilometers) north of the Venezuelan coast, they function as a staging post for the northbound transshipment of cocaine from Colombia and Venezuela.

Shipments often follow the ‘ant system,’ where cocaine arrives and leaves in small amounts. One of the most common methods to transport cocaine to the ABC Islands is for fishermen to go on expeditions to pick up cocaine sourced from larger shipments. This cocaine is collected from the Isla de Aves, a Venezuelan territory that sits 380 miles north of the mainland, or from delayed drops in the water from larger boats located via GPS. This refers to when ships leave cocaine stashes in the water to be picked up at a later date by another vessel, rather than the transfer of product occurring immediately.

Cocaine arriving to Sint-Maarten often comes via Saba Bank, a submarine atoll in the Dutch Caribbean around 2 hours south of Sint Maarten by boat. Pleasure crafts, fishing vessels, and go-fast boats have all been found at the bank. Go-fast boats are also used to transport cocaine directly from Venezuela to the island, while some go-fasts originating in Sint-Maarten rendezvous with larger shipments from Venezuela, which complete part of the journey north.

From Colombia, traffickers use similar methods. Containers from major Colombian ports such as Cartagena bring drugs to the islands. Via sea, cocaine has been smuggled in containers carrying flowers sent from Colombia to Aruba and Curaçao, which then continue to

the Netherlands. Traffickers also use go-fasts to reach the ABC islands, including one intercepted earlier this year from La Guajira aiming for Curaçao.

Via air, there are direct flights from Medellín to Aruba and Curaçao, providing opportunities for traffickers to move drugs using human couriers who ingest small quantities of cocaine – known colloquially as “swallowers.”

## ROUTES FROM EU OVERSEAS TERRITORIES TO EUROPE

From the ABC islands, cocaine is most commonly transported to the Netherlands either via commercial flights or shipping containers using the rip-on/off method.

In Aruba, Oranjestad is the main passenger and cruise ship port, while Barcadera is the main seaport for cargo, flagged as a likely point for trafficking routes. In Bonaire and Curaçao, the main ports of Kralendijk (Bonaire) and Willemstad (Curaçao) are used for both. There is a constant flow of containers to the Netherlands for purposes including Dutch people moving home. These containers are vulnerable to contamination by traffickers. Larger shipments have also been sent to the UK. Ireland’s largest ever cocaine seizure arrived on a Panamanian cargo ship, the MV Matthew, which had departed from Curaçao, indicating that in some cases large quantities are stored or shipped from the island.

Via air, commercial flights travel directly and indirectly from Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, and Sint Maarten to Amsterdam. From Sint Maarten, there are also direct flights to Paris. Overall, there is more evidence of air trafficking via swallowers and body packers from Sint Maarten than from the other ABC islands. Traffickers often begin by trafficking 5 kilograms and then increase the amount if successful. There has been

a recent increase in swallowers traveling from Sint Maarten to France, including people from Curaçao aboard direct flights to Paris. This suggests there are likely stashes of cocaine on the island, which are moved onwards in smaller quantities. Although reports are less frequent on the other islands, swallowers have been noted in Curaçao and Bonaire. In Curaçao, most swallowers come from Saliña and Sioux, neighborhoods near the airport.

Smaller pleasure craft have also been linked to trafficking. In Curaçao, there are occasional discoveries of small Cessna planes used for drug trafficking.

Via sea, the port of Rotterdam is a major destination for cocaine shipments smuggled in containers. Major shipments often come from Curaçao. Some cocaine seizures suggest that shipments are occasionally picked up by smaller vessels. This includes the operation resulting in the seizure of cocaine from the Panamanian ship MV Matthew, where two men were arrested from a trawler on its way to rendezvous with the larger ship

## ALTERNATIVE ROUTES

The ABC islands and Sint Maarten receive high numbers of illegal migrants arriving from Venezuela. Boats from Venezuela carrying migrants are often used to smuggle arms and drugs into the islands.

Cocaine is broken up into smaller amounts and moved between the islands before being shipped to Europe. Bonaire has also been identified as a transit point for drug movements between Curaçao and Venezuela

From Sint Maarten, Colombian and Venezuelan drug trafficking organizations employ Dominican boat captains to transport large quantities of cocaine to

Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, and the US Virgin Islands.

Mexican pilots have used Bonaire and Aruba as a stop-off point before traveling to Venezuela or Colombia to pick up cocaine and travel to African countries, including Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau. Young pilots, usually Colombian or Mexican, are recruited by DTOs, likely fraudulently obtaining licenses that usually require hundreds of flying hours and cost thousands of dollars. From Curaçao, private aircraft have been documented leaving for Venezuela for drug smuggling purposes. After arriving in Venezuela, they normally continue to Central America or other Caribbean locations such as the Bahamas and the US Virgin Islands.

## CRIMINAL NETWORKS

### DOMESTIC ACTORS

The No Limit Soldiers was the largest and most notorious drug trafficking organization originating from the ABC islands. The No Limit Soldiers originated as a neighbourhood gang in Willemstad, Curacao. While NLS began as a social-constituency network and community organization, it subsequently developed into a trafficking organization. Gang leaders set up a route to the Netherlands in the early 2000s, beginning with human couriers but growing to move larger quantities. In 2012, the group was trafficking cocaine concealed within airplane wings from Curacao to the Netherlands, enabled by corrupt airport staff in both countries.

Key commanders of the gang included leader Shurendy “Tyson” Quant and his second in command, Urvin Wawoe, alias “Nuto.” These two were key to developing the NLS into a transnational trafficking network. They were supported by a number of “lieutenants,” or “soldiers,” and a wider circle of affiliates,

who usually act as independent contractors. However, both men have since been arrested.

The NLS contracted individuals or members of smaller criminal groups as muscle. In Curacao, local gangs “Army” and “Gaza” have been contracted by NLS. The NLS also appears to have corrupted members of security forces to help them traffic cocaine. In Aruba, one Coast Guard has been linked to NLS transporters.

Local groups operating in Aruba are mainly small gangs subcontracted by larger international criminal groups to engage in trafficking activities. In Aruba, there are around 100 small groups that seem to lack the sophistication to develop into an organized group with international reach. In Bonaire, there are also no real distinct gang groups. In Sint Maarten, gangs include the Dutch Quarter Gang (DQG) and Nobody is Safe (NBS), but these groups mainly carry out armed robberies rather than drug trafficking.

### FOREIGN ACTORS

European actors have also been apprehended in Aruba or linked to cocaine shipments from the island. A criminal organization in the Balkan region was taken down in 2023, including 13 arrests in Serbia. A 2020 seizure of 5 tons of cocaine on a cargo ship destined for Greece, which involved the arrests of its Montenegrin crew members in Aruba, was linked back to this group.

Actors in Curaçao have family connections to the Netherlands to facilitate drug trafficking and push for the infiltration of corrupt actors at receiving ports. In September 2021, a suspect known as “Gregory F.” was arrested in Curaçao for international drug trafficking. He lived in the Netherlands and Suriname and had a Dutch passport.

## GUYANA, SURINAME AND FRENCH GUIANA: THE SOUTH AMERICAN CARIBBEAN

Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana serve as strategic transit points in the cocaine pipeline to Europe. Situated along the northern coast of South America, they allow traffickers to store shipments from Venezuela before moving them north or east, including to Brazil and West Africa. Suriname and Guyana both retain commercial ties to the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, respectively. These economic ties are complemented by familial and social bonds, which traffickers exploit to distribute cocaine to European consumers. Proximity to Venezuela means that shifts in trafficking routes can significantly impact drug dynamics. There is evidence that both Guyana and Suriname, for example, have been used as launching points for semisubmersible vessels headed to Europe.

## ROUTES

### ROUTES FROM SOUTH AMERICA TO THE SOUTH AMERICAN CARIBBEAN

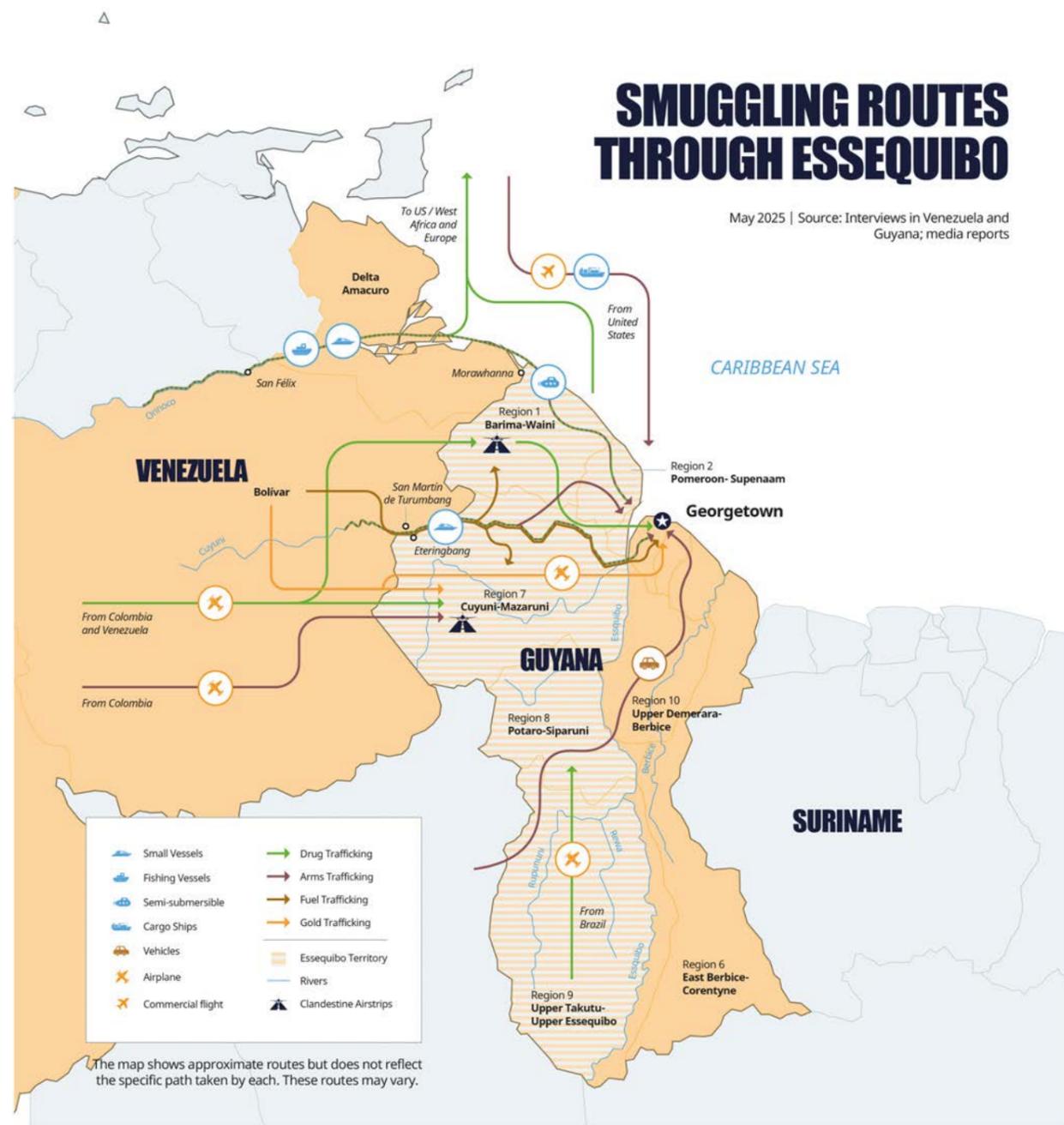
Drugs mainly enter Guyana overland from Venezuela or by air from Colombia and Brazil. Guyana has seen an increase in the seizure of cocaine coming from Venezuela, including a record 4.4 tons seized in August 2024, suggesting that the country may play a larger role as a cocaine transit point for drugs arriving from Venezuela than previously suspected. In Guyana, drugs frequently arrive by plane and land on illegal airstrips in the interior of the country, particularly in the Essequibo region, before being taken by road to the nation’s capital, Georgetown. Cocaine also enters in legitimate cargo on commercial

and private aircraft, human couriers, and postal systems. Due to the oil boom in Guyana, infrastructure developments connecting Guyana by road to Brazil and potential port developments may lead to more trafficking opportunities.

Cocaine also arrives from Venezuela to Guyana via sea routes. From Venezuela, the Curuni River connects the state of Bolívar with Guyana’s region 7, both of which are mining areas. The Orinoco River flows from Amazonas to the Atlantic Ocean in the northeastern state of Delta Amacuro, bordering Guyana. From there, smugglers take the Barima River which leads directly to Guyana’s Region 1. It is unclear if these are used for cocaine or mainly for other smuggling, including arms and weapons. Additionally, clandestine shipyards for building semi-submersible vessels have been discovered in Delta Amacuro since at least 2009, while another so-called “narco submarine” was discovered in the Orinoco River in Delta Amacuro in 2023. Narcotics are also reportedly brought from Venezuela down the Pomeroon River, taken to Supenaam, and then across the Essequibo River before being sent abroad.

Semisubmersible vessels have also been found in the jungle along the border with Venezuela. A record land seizure of 3,600 kilograms of cocaine was found near where the vessels have been found, although it remains unclear how frequently such vessels are used and if they were used in this case. Other instances of semisubmersible vessels in eastern Venezuela potentially supplying Guyana, French Guiana, and Suriname have been limited.

Cocaine enters Suriname via similar methods. Most commonly, cocaine arrives via planes landing on illegal airstrips in the nation’s jungle interior, in areas including Tafelburg. Clandestine airstrips in Apure,



Venezuela, are known to be the start-off points for flights to Suriname. In April 2025, the Minister of Justice and Police reported that there are 400-600 cocaine airdrops or landings per vessel, averaging one or two daily drug deliveries by airplane on illegal airstrips in the interior. In December 2024, 170 packages of cocaine were found at the scene of a plane crash in the Stondansi Valley area. In Suriname, between 2000

and 2010, human carriers were found nearly daily on flights to and from the country, although today traffickers appear to be moving towards larger shipments.

Contraband also arrives to Suriname via sea routes from Brazil using schooners, which unload along the coast or rivers. Contraband is then transported on trucks, usually to Suriname’s capital city,

Paramaribo, although it is unclear if this route is frequently used to transport cocaine. From Suriname, traffickers transit drugs across the Maroni River, which acts as a natural border with French Guiana to move cocaine onward.

The Maroni River also serves as a key point for illegal gold mining in both Suriname and French Guiana. Numerous stores on the banks of the river on the Surinamese side operate as logistics and collection centers for illegal miners, mainly Brazilians. These supply stores are generally controlled by Chinese businessmen who supply both tools for illegal mining (dredges, engines, and materials) and basic supplies for life in the jungle and in areas of illegal mining (food, water, tents, etc.). Likewise, in many cases, mercury used for small-scale gold mining enters illegally the French Guiana via, mainly, Suriname.

Gold mined illegally in French Guiana using mercury is subsequently smuggled and sold in Suriname to the same Chinese stores that sell the necessary equipment to illegal miners. It enters the illicit trade already in local stores around the Maroni River using document forgery – or auto-declaration documents (namely, a statement of conformance or a proof of origin) – and through the mixing of legally sourced gold with illegally sourced gold. The gold is then flown to Paramaribo, where large gold shops mix it with gold from all over the country. It is then shipped mainly to Amsterdam and then on to countries in the Middle East.

**ROUTES FROM THE SOUTH AMERICAN CARIBBEAN TO WEST AFRICA AND EUROPE**

Guyana has historically been a transit country for drugs shipped from Colombia to the Caribbean and the US. Today, cocaine

trafficked through Guyana is increasingly bound for West Africa and Europe. After arriving in Guyana, cocaine is mainly transported via land to Georgetown before being smuggled into shipping containers destined for Europe. Traffickers typically use the rip-on/rip-off method, in which a legitimate shipment is ‘piggy-backed’ without the shipper’s knowledge. Cocaine has been found in rice, bauxite, and rum containershipments. Recent investments in infrastructure, including the development of the Berbice Deepwater Port, will likely increase Guyana’s attractiveness as a dispatch point for shipping drugs to the United States and Europe.

Smaller quantities of cocaine are smuggled out of Guyana via commercial flights using human couriers. There are direct flights from Georgetown to Amsterdam.

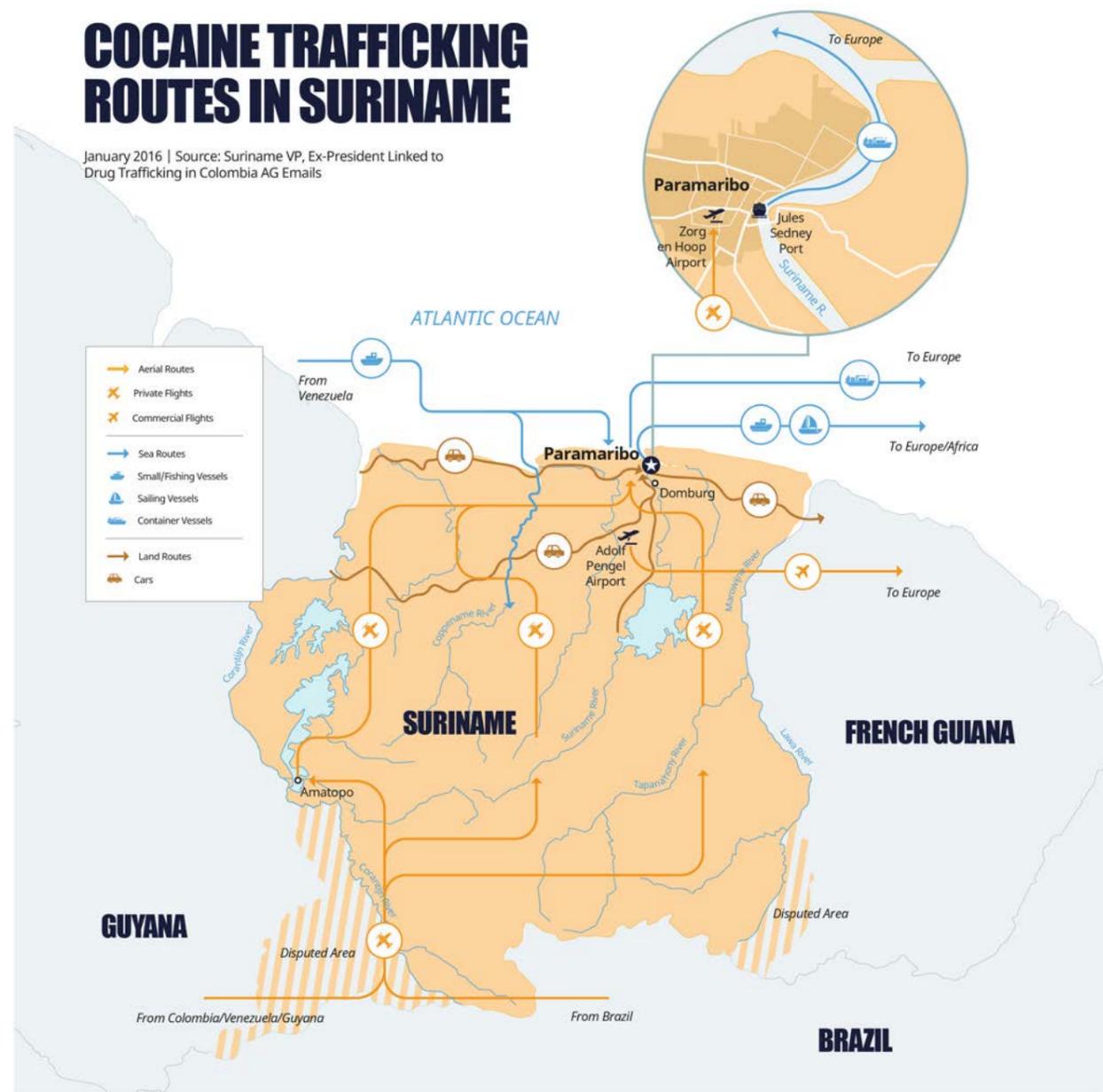
From Suriname, drugs are taken to the Paramaribo port to be shipped in containers, often hidden in their internal structure. The main export products are rice, wood (80%), and frozen fish. All these exports, especially wood, have been used to smuggle cocaine. Cocaine on cargo ships has been seized at ports on the journey to Europe, including 2.3 tons of cocaine seized in 2019 from a shipment of rice cargo traveling via Guadeloupe.

Quantities of cocaine transported by air are small. Most of the drug trafficking is done by human carriers. It seems that loads stored on planes, rather than carried by mules, were also happening.

Additionally, some cocaine is picked up off the coast of Suriname before arriving in Europe. Traffickers leave cocaine in the waters surrounding the nation for the vessel to pick up after it has completed inspections at the port before continuing on to Europe. Go-fast boats have been

# COCAINE TRAFFICKING ROUTES IN SURINAME

January 2016 | Source: Suriname VP, Ex-President Linked to Drug Trafficking in Colombia AG Emails



apprehended leaving Suriname to load cocaine onto fishing vessels and trawlers.

From French Guiana, large quantities of cocaine are trafficked via commercial aircraft flying directly from the Cayenne Felix Eboué airport to Paris. In 2021, officials seized 1.3 tons of cocaine at Félix Eboué airport from travelers going to mainland

France carrying drugs on or in their person or their luggage. Some reports indicate that a flight from Cayenne to Paris can have 10-30 mules on each aircraft.

The phenomenon of drug mules traveling from Caribbean and South American countries to the European Union has continued to evolve in recent years.

Spain, France, and the Netherlands are the three EU countries most affected, given their direct air connections with most countries in the region. However, according to available official data, trends vary depending on the country and origin.

Cocaine seizures at French airports increased by 81.9% between 2023 and 2024, reaching more than 2 tons of cocaine in total. The main origins in 2024 are mainly Martinique (1019 kg), with an increase of 269% compared to 2023, Brazil (555 kg), and French Guiana (279 kg). In the case of Dutch airports, official data show that cocaine seizures from flights originating in Latin America and the Caribbean have increased from approximately 2.25 tons in 2023 to 2.36 tons in 2024 and 824 kg in 2025, of which an estimated 63% come from routes originating in the Caribbean. This 65% decrease in 2025 is due, in part, to stricter controls at origin and destination. Finally, public data on seizures at Spanish airports is scarce and fragmented. However, in 2024, the Civil Guard seized 6.36 tons of cocaine, combining data on drug mules and cargo.

Via sea, Rotterdam and Antwerp are the main European ports of arrival for cocaine from Guyana and Suriname. Much of the cocaine arriving from these countries also arrives in France, whose major ports include Marseille, Dunkirk, and Le Havre. French Guiana and Suriname are major suppliers to French cocaine markets. 55% of cocaine seizures in 2022 entering mainland France (14 tonnes) originated in the French Antilles or French Guiana, although Suriname also plays a significant role in supplying the French market, and was the main departure country for cocaine entering France in 2020. Via air, airports in Amsterdam and Paris are common destinations. There are direct flights from Paramaribo, Suriname, and Georgetown,

Guyana, to Amsterdam, and direct flights from Cayenne, French Guiana, to Paris.

## CRIMINAL NETWORKS

### DOMESTIC ACTORS IN THE SOUTH AMERICAN CARIBBEAN

In Guyana, local gang groups mainly operate at the national level providing 'muscle' to drug criminal networks, with limited connections to the multinational criminal syndicates. Gangs, called 'crews,' are loosely organized, lack clear leadership, and often only band together to commit individual crimes. These groups are rarely involved in serious organized crime, and most violence is unrelated to organized crime.

Guyana's biggest visible drug trafficker was Shaheed "Roger" Khan, who trafficked tons of cocaine to the US and Europe after establishing contacts with Colombian criminals. He is believed to have laundered his illicit profits through businesses in Guyana. Khan was arrested in Suriname in 2006 and released in 2019. It is not clear if he returned to illicit activities, and no trafficker has reached his status since. Local brokers facilitate the transportation of cocaine via corruption of low-level customs officials. Authorities have convicted individuals for coordinating drug shipments.

In Suriname, unlike in Guyana, there are reports of sophisticated, high-level drug trafficking networks. At least 4-5 criminal networks with entrepreneurial structures are operating in the nation, all of which cooperate with each other. Unlike in Guyana, some shootings and robberies are linked to drug trafficking.

Private sector groups and businessmen are involved in Surinamese gold mining and drug trafficking. Ramchender «Radj»

Oedit, a Surinamese businessman whose company operated in Curacao and the Netherlands, was sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment in 2023 after a plane carrying 488 kilograms of cocaine was seized on his property in the Saramacca district in March 2018.

### FOREIGN ACTORS IN THE SOUTH AMERICAN CARIBBEAN

In Guyana, transnational organized crime networks smuggle gold, cocaine, and people. The links between these networks and gang-like structures are limited, mainly consisting only of criminal networks contracting locals as muscle.

Regarding other forms of criminal activity, Venezuelan groups frequently cross into Guyana to rob or extort miners. Similarly, the Colombian group ELN collects taxes from smugglers and controls several illegal gold mines near the Guyana border in the Casacoima and Antonio Díaz municipalities of Delta Amacuro.

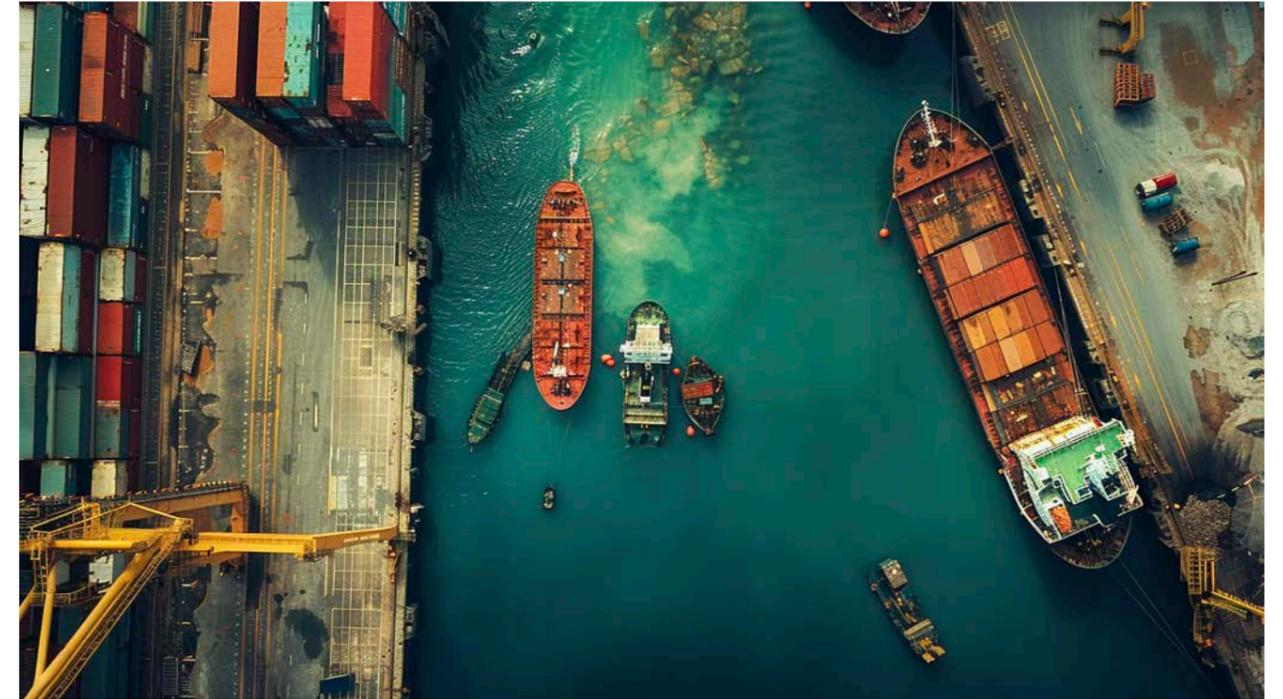
There is also involvement of European actors in drug trafficking in Guyana. Vitesh Jamnapersad Guptar, a Dutch national who operated a mall in Georgetown, was arrested in the capital, alleged to be part of the Italian group, 'Ndrangheta, one of the largest mafia organizations in the world. This mafia organization reportedly has a multi-million-euro business that smuggled shipments of cocaine up to 200 kilograms from Brazil, Guyana, and Colombia to Rotterdam and Antwerp. Reportedly, during the period January 2015–June 2018, Guptar was wanted for his alleged participation in 'Ndrangheta. Additionally, Portuguese and Indian companies are purportedly linked to drug-related activities, indicating the at least partial involvement of senior international businessmen.

In Suriname, foreign traffickers – primarily Colombian – partner with Surinamese actors in the drug trade and hire locals to transport cocaine. However, the Colombian presence in Suriname does not appear to be significant.

Criminal organizations from the Netherlands are believed to have strong ties to organized crime in Dutch-speaking Suriname, with some notable arrests pointing to this link. In September 2021, Gregory F., a Dutch national, was arrested in Curacao for international drug trafficking.

In French Guiana, alleged corrupt officials help to ship cocaine at points in the French Caribbean and in ports in France such as Dunkirk, Marseille, and Le Havre. This has been shown through investigations following multiple seizures of hundreds of kilograms of cocaine leaving Martinique or the French Guianese port of Degrad-des-Cannes.

Surinamese musician Joel Martinus, alias Bordo, was recently convicted in France for his role in a criminal network that smuggled cocaine from French Guiana to mainland France using mules aboard flights bound for the Orly and Roissy airports in Paris.



## CONCLUSIONS

Once primarily a bridge to the United States, the Caribbean has become a flexible and indispensable hub in the transatlantic cocaine supply chain, benefiting from its geography, extensive maritime and air connections, and close political and economic ties to Europe.

At the core of this trafficking system is a highly adaptable criminal ecosystem. Rather than hierarchical cartel-style groups, trafficking in the Caribbean is dominated by decentralized, transactional networks. South American producers, primarily from Colombia, supply cocaine, while international brokers, often from Europe and the Western Balkans, coordinate logistics, financing, corruption, and transport without directly handling the drugs. Local criminal groups act as subcontractors, managing reception, storage, and onward shipment. This structure allows networks to rapidly shift routes, methods, and partnerships when faced with enforcement pressure.

The Caribbean geography, infrastructure and economic diversity offers traffickers an unparalleled diversity of smuggling methods. Cocaine moves via commercial shipping containers, go-fast boats, fishing vessels, yachts, semi-submersibles, commercial flights, private aircraft, and human couriers. Containers remain the most cost-effective way to move large volumes to Europe, particularly through busy ports with high cargo throughput. Smaller maritime vessels and aircraft are crucial for regional movement and flexibility, while semi-submersibles increasingly enable direct Atlantic crossings. This diversity ensures resilience: when one method becomes risky, traffickers pivot to others. This is evident at the moment with US operation in the Caribbean.

Within the South Caribbean Corridor there are two main trafficking sub-corridors. The first runs through Caribbean islands, which function as staging and consolidation points before shipments depart for Europe. The Dominican Republic emerges as the region's most important transshipment hub due to its deep-water ports. Direct shipping links to major European ports, and large container volumes that provide cover for illicit cargo. French and Dutch overseas territories, such as Curaçao, Aruba, Sint Maarten and Martinique are particularly vulnerable because they offer direct access to Europe while often bypassing standard customs controls.

The second corridor runs through the South American Caribbean—Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana—where sparse border controls, river networks, jungle airstrips, and Atlantic access facilitate large-scale trafficking. These countries increasingly serve as launch points for container shipments, air couriers, and semi-submersible vessels bound for Europe

or West Africa. Venezuela plays a central enabling role. Its proximity to Colombia's coca-producing regions, extensive corruption within state institutions, and permissive environment for armed groups such as the ELN and elements of the Venezuelan military make it a major transit hub. Cocaine flows from Venezuela to nearby islands, Trinidad and Tobago, and the South American Caribbean. Recent U.S. naval deployments and interventions have disrupted some routes, particularly go-fast boat corridors, but there is little evidence of a sustained reduction in cocaine flows to Europe. Instead, traffickers have rerouted shipments through land, river, air, and alternative maritime pathways.

Corruption is fundamental at every stage, particularly in ports and airports, while poverty and limited economic alternatives in coastal and island communities provide a steady supply of local facilitators.

In conclusion, the report emphasizes that the South Caribbean corridor is not a fixed set of routes but a fluid system shaped by enforcement pressure, political instability and market demand. Effective responses require international cooperation, intelligence sharing, targeted anti-corruption efforts, and attention to the socioeconomic conditions that allow trafficking networks to regenerate. Without addressing these structural drivers, the Caribbean will remain a critical and adaptable gateway for cocaine entering Europe.





# EL PACCTO 2.0

EU-LAC Partnership on justice and security