



Organized Crime

Overview

Organized criminal activity in Canada is a multi-faceted problem that requires a broad-based, integrated approach by the country's law enforcement agencies.

The RCMP works closely with its partners to combat organized crime in all of its forms.

Definition

Organized Crime is one of five strategic priorities established by the RCMP. It is defined by Canada's *Criminal Code* as crime committed by any group of at least three people that has as one of its main purposes or activities the facilitation or commission of one or more serious offences where the primary motive is profit.

That definition encompasses a broad spectrum of criminal groups including outlaw motorcycle gangs (OMGs)*, Asian-, Italian- and East European-based organizations, and networks of people trafficking in child pornography, counterfeit credit cards or illicit telemarketing or electronic mail schemes.

Countering Organized Crime

Organized crime is an international

problem that ignores national boundaries. The fact that some criminal organizations have seemingly limitless resources and involve themselves in almost any illegal activity that turns a profit makes fighting them particularly challenging.

To counter organized crime, the RCMP has tended to move from attempts to shut down particular commodity areas, such as the drug trade, counterfeit goods or prostitution, to targeting criminal groups themselves. Tactical enforcement remains important, but the emphasis is on prioritization in order to more effectively use resources.

OMGs, Asian-based gangs and traditional organized crime groups top the list of organized crime priorities.

In the face of these criminal organizations, multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional responses are essential to sharing intelligence and can lead to better planning and coordination. Through programs and teams such as IPOC (Integrated Proceeds of Crime), IBETs (Integrated Border Enforcement Teams) and IMETs (Integrated Market Enforcement Teams), the RCMP is banding together with domestic and international partners to stop organized crime.

Quick Facts

- The RCMP's Organized Crime Branch consists of the Undercover Operations Unit, the Source Witness Protection Unit and the Organized Crime Program Development Unit.
- In 2002, Operation Green Sweep resulted in seizures of 190,000 marihuana plants and the arrests of more than 500 people associated with marihuana 'grow houses'.



Organized Crime

Quick Facts

- Between 2001 and 2003, the RCMP and partner agencies made more arrests of OMG* members than in any comparable period of time, and effectively shut down entire chapters of the Bandidos and Hells Angels. More than 340 individuals were arrested and charged with crimes ranging from participating in a criminal organization to murder.
- In May 2003, the RCMP's Drug Section seized about 1,360 kg of cocaine from a boat off the coast of Costa Rica.

Front line officers play an important role in the fight against organized crime by communicating intelligence to their plainclothes counterparts. For instance, the Pipeline/Convoy/Jetway Program, which trains general duty officers to recognize suspicious cargo, has proven to be especially useful in stopping the movement of illegal goods by criminal organizations. One dedicated interdiction team, the Saskatchewan High Volume Traffic Checkstop, Team seized more than 830 kg of marihuana in February 2003.

The RCMP also works closely with Criminal Intelligence Service Canada, which unites Canadian law enforcement agencies in the fight against organized crime by providing the necessary infrastructure for sharing intelligence and promoting inter-agency cooperation.

New Powers of Enforcement

The creation of legislation such as the *Organized Crime and Law Enforcement Act*, provides Canadian law enforcement with new powers to further combat organized crime. These powers enable the RCMP to continue its efforts to counter organized criminal activities.

In addition to providing more latitude for undercover officers, the Act – passed by Parliament in early 2002 –

simplifies the definition of organized crime, makes it an offence to impede the administration of justice through intimidation and targets those who recruit others to join a criminal organization.

Support for and from the public

Youth, women, seniors, consumers, businesses ... the list goes on. Organized crime puts almost all segments of Canadian society at risk. RCMP Victim Services, established in 1988 as part of the Crime Prevention and Victim Services Branch helps those who fall prey to organized crime, people such as women forced into prostitution and senior citizens who have fallen prey to telemarketing fraud rings.

In its fight against organized crime, the RCMP also relies on the public's help. The RCMP's Organized Crime Branch is constantly working to increase the number of high-level informants it has inside criminal organizations. One way those who are aware of organized crime can help to stop it is by picking up the phone and calling their local RCMP detachment.

For more information, please visit www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca.