



WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION
ORGANISATION MONDIALE DES DOUANES

REPORT

Operation COCAIR 3



February 2012



Joint concerted action to counter a genuine threat to the balance of this African region

The World Customs Organization (WCO) Secretariat regularly conducts analyses of drug seizures made by our Member countries and input into the Customs Enforcement Network (CEN).

The trend noted between 2005 and 2008, showing a somewhat uncharacteristic routing whereby cocaine shipments consigned in South America with Europe as their final destination were stored in and transited West Africa and, to a lesser extent, Central Africa, was borne out in 2009 and 2010, even though this phenomenon is somewhat on the wane.

In December 2008 and in June 2010, in partnership with INTERPOL, the European Commission and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the WCO Secretariat carried out pilot Operations COCAIR 1 and COCAIR 2, designed to strengthen anti-drug trafficking mechanisms in over twenty international airports in West Africa, Central Africa and Brazil. The aim was to intercept shipments of cocaine and other drugs bound for Europe.

These two Operations were implemented thanks to the establishment of a three-phase action plan :

(1) Tailoring and use of CENcomm (CEN communication tool adapted to the Operations' requirements), as well as the INTERPOL I-24/7 database.

(2) Training for officers from the various participating services (Customs-Police-Gendarmerie or other drug enforcement agencies). The provision of drug detection kits to all selected airports.

(3) Establishment of an Operational Co-ordination Unit (OCU) in Dakar (Senegal).

The Western and Central Africa Regional Intelligence Liaison Offices (RILOs) were directly involved in the mechanism and played a decisive role in implementing these two Operations. Given the success of both Operations, not only in terms of positive results but also of the enthusiasm generated and the motivation they inspired, a decision was taken to roll out a new Operation reprising the same overall objectives as the first two: Operation COCAIR 3.

This latest Operation, set in motion by the WCO, in partnership with INTERPOL, the European Commission and the UNODC, also falls within the scope of a new Project called AIRCOP aimed at improving controls in international airports, especially by enhancing cooperation between drug enforcement services and by establishing effective and secure communication systems: CENcomm for Customs and I-24/7 for the Police.

Countries taking part

West Africa

- Benin (Cotonou Airport)
- Burkina Faso (Ouagadougou Airport)
- Cape Verde (Praia, Santa Maria and Sao Vicente Airports)
- Côte d'Ivoire (Abidjan Airport)
- Gambia (Banjul Airport)
- Ghana (Accra Airport)
- Guinea (Conakry Airport)
- Mali (Bamako Airport)
- Mauritania (Nouakchott Airport)
- Niger (Niamey Airport)
- Nigeria (Lagos and Abuja Airports)
- Senegal (Dakar Airport)

- Togo (Lomé Airport)

Central Africa

- Cameroon (Yaoundé and Douala Airports)
- Central African Republic (Bangui Airport)
- Chad (N'Djamena Airport)
- Democratic Republic of the Congo (Kinshasa and Lubumbashi Airports)
- Gabon (Libreville Airport)
- Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville Airport)

Other region

- Brazil (Sao Paulo Airport).

Training in advance of the Operation

- Basic training (risk analysis, selection and targeting of operations posing a risk, product recognition, police investigation, etc.) as well as training in the use of CENcomm and INTERPOL's I-24/7 database was thought necessary to ensure the success of the Operation.
- This training took place in the WCO's Regional Training Centre, located in Brazzaville (Republic of the Congo), from 7 to 11 November 2011.
- A good forty experts (Customs – Police – Gendarmerie and other drug enforcement agencies) from eighteen of the twenty countries involved in Operation COCAIR 3 attended the training (Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, Senegal and Togo).
- All the experts having completed the training left Brazzaville with the full set of course materials required to redeliver this training within their respective countries. The knowledge gained from the training was passed on in the majority of countries participating in the Operation.

DOUANE

Formation aux nouveaux outils de lutte contre les stupéfiants

Plusieurs douaniers, policiers et gendarmes apprennent depuis le 7 novembre, à Brazzaville, de nouvelles techniques pour mieux cerner la problématique de contrôle des produits nocifs.

La séminaire de formation des formateurs, dans le cadre de la lutte contre le narcotrafic dans sa troisième phase, désigné Cocair-3, se déroule au centre régional de formation de l'Organisation mondiale de douane (OMD). L'objectif de cette session, comme celui des deux précédentes, est de renforcer le contrôle de lutte contre le trafic des stupéfiants dans 25 aéroports internationaux et d'intercepter les expéditions de cocaïne et autres drogues à destination d'Europe. Notons que les deux autres formations se sont tenues à Ouagadougou, au Burkina Faso, où se trouve un autre centre régional. Cette fois, l'OMD a porté son choix sur le Congo. La direction du centre s'accompagne tous les participants durant le séminaire en mettant à leur disposition ses modestes installations. En effet, le centre dispose de deux salles de cours équipées de 24 ordinateurs ayant accès à Internet, avec son personnel d'appui. Les thèmes retenus pour ce sémi-

naire qui s'achève le 11 novembre portent sur la reconnaissance des stupéfiants, l'initiation à l'analyse du risque et au ciblage, outil nécessaire pour le bon déroulement du Cocair. Cette formation de base couvrira ces différents secteurs et préparera les participants à l'utilisation des outils de communication et au maniement des bases de données. Le directeur général des douanes, Jean Alfred Onanga, a relevé que la lutte contre le narcotrafic était une préoccupation importante de tous les gouvernements du monde. Ainsi, plusieurs initiatives ont été développées aux niveaux national, sous-régional et international.

L'opération Cocair menée dans plus de 22 pays

Depuis 2010, Interpol, l'ONUDC en partenariat avec la Commission européenne et en collaboration avec les bureaux régionaux chargés de renseignement d'Afrique occidentale et centrale, d'Europe de l'ouest, du secrétariat de l'OMD, ont mené



La préparation des travaux

l'opération Cocair dans plus de 22 pays d'Afrique et au Brésil. La Commission européenne en a assuré le financement.

« Nous le savons tous, le narcotrafic constitue indéniablement une réelle menace politique et économique en Afrique de l'ouest et centrale, mais également en Amérique du Sud, aux Caraïbes et en Europe. Et nous savons qu'une intervention efficace nécessite un soutien

de tous les pays de la région » a souligné l'ancien directeur de la région « nous avons travaillé avec la Commission européenne et en étroite collaboration avec l'OMD ». Il a également souligné que la formation des agents, une priorité régionale, a été martelée par le secrétaire général de l'OMD, Pierre Bertrand. Interpellant les participants, il a expliqué la nécessité de renforcer les capacités des administrations douanières et policières dans la région en matière de lutte contre le trafic de drogue, spécifiquement de la cocaïne.

Seigneur Bertrand, la mise en œuvre de ces opérations a permis de faire le point sur la situation et de mesurer la volonté de s'y impliquer. Les résultats ont largement dépassé les attentes. « Je suis convaincu que tous les experts ici présents pour prendre le relais de cette formation une fois revenus dans leurs pays respectifs », a-t-il souhaité.

Cette formation intègre la troisième mission de la douane, celle de protéger les frontières. Rappelons que la douane en a trois : fiscalité, économie et protection. Le Cocair-1 a eu lieu en décembre 2008 et le Cocair-2 en juillet 2010. Dans ce même cadre, en plus de la formation des agents, une dotation d'appareils de détection a eu lieu. L'opération Cocair-3 arrive dans sa phase de mise en œuvre. Elle débute par cette formation à l'intention des agents de douane, de la police et de la gendarmerie travaillant dans les aéroports internationaux, affectés pour cette opération.

Nancy-France Loumboué

OCU set up at WCO headquarters in Brussels

Its role

Provide international co-ordination and consultation with regard to information sharing and operational decisions.

Maintain regular contact with the Customs and Police National Contact Points (NCPs).

Relay the information received from NCPs (seizure reports and alerts) to other countries as well as to the RILO Western Europe, after having supplemented it where necessary.

Prepare daily information sheets reporting on the previous day's major developments and activities and circulate them among participating countries.

The OCU was made up of a dozen experts from Member countries, the Western Africa RILO, the Central Africa RILO and the Western Europe RILO, as well as WCO and INTERPOL experts to review the nominal data and for Customs-Police co-ordination.



Secretary General of the WCO, Kunio Mikuriya, welcomes the OCU experts

Results

Drug seizures:

- Cannabis: 9 seizures totalling 468.5 kg
- Cocaine: 10 seizures totalling 24.68 kg.



Brazil - Sao Paulo
Date: 04/12/11
Mode of transport: air
Route: Sao Paulo – Doha – Damascus
Drugs: 5.9 kg cocaine
Method of concealment: in luggage



Cape Verde - Praia
Date: 04/12/11
Mode of transport: air
Route: Fortaleza (Brazil) – Praia (Cape Verde)
Drugs: 1 kg cocaine
Method of concealment: in a wig

- Heroin: 2 seizures totalling 6.31 kg
- Ecstasy: 1 seizure totalling 1.1 kg
- Methamphetamines: 2 seizures totalling 1.6 kg
- Amphetamines: 2 seizures totalling 2 kg
- Mescaline: 1 seizure totalling 0.4 kg

Seizures of cash:

- Four seizures involving 655,620 USD, 2,186,500 euro (including one seizure of 2,000,000 euro found in the luggage of two passengers in Mauritania at outbound screening) and 13,150,000 CFAF. The total amount seized came to the equivalent of 1,877,458,508 CFAF.
- It is strongly suspected that these funds can be traced back to organized crime activities.



13,150,000 CFAF - Côte d'Ivoire

Seizures of weapons and ammunition:

- Two discoveries (three shotguns and one automatic pistol together with ammunition)



Three shotguns - Mali

Seizures of African art objects:

- Four seizures of masks, statues and loincloths totalling 50 kg



Masks and loincloths - Côte d'Ivoire

Seizures of CITES goods:

- Four seizures of worked ivory objects totalling 5.932 kg



79 ivory products - Côte d'Ivoire

Seizures of counterfeit goods, including medicines :

- Three seizures of goods totalling approximately 120 kg



Republic of the Congo – 113 kg of medicines

Over and above the seizures of drugs, cash, weapons, works of art, CITES goods, etc., the main objectives of the Operation were met, especially in terms of:

- Heightening controls at the major international airports in West and Central Africa on flights bound for European countries or major North African hubs (Casablanca, Tunis and Algiers). Almost all the participating countries deployed heightened controls on sensitive flights and, in some countries taking the part in Operation COCAIR 3, the control mechanism was extended to other modes of transport (land, sea).
- Identifying natural and legal persons and organizations involved in this trafficking, within the scope of the legal provisions offered by each country's legislation.
- Raising the awareness of airport inspection services about smuggling risks on flights bound for European countries (direct flights or flights transiting hubs) and via different carriers (especially postal freight and express delivery at export, on which there are usually few inspections).
- Gathering of information on the status of cocaine trafficking from this sub-region and assessing and analysing this information in order to produce risk profiles and updated and relevant targeting criteria.
- The training given at the Brazzaville RTC on product identification and targeting of passengers and the redelivery of this training to field officers in the participating countries produced results, since most of the seizures made were thanks to instincts acquired during the successive training sessions, especially in terms of analysis of passenger behaviour and utilizing passenger lists.
- Strengthening information sharing between Customs and Police services on this phenomenon, as well as co-operation and information sharing between the regions involved, using the expertise and logistical resources made available by the WCO and INTERPOL. This objective widely accomplished during the Operation and continues to be sought on a daily basis. This is undoubtedly the most tangible result.

It goes without saying that the rollout of Operation COCAIR 3, largely funded by the European Commission, has to form part of a much wider-reaching and sustainable capacity building project for Customs administrations, Police services and other agencies responsible for combating drug trafficking in this region, over a period of at least four to five years.

