

Organization Attributes Sheet: ETA Network in Venezuela

Author: Stephen Coulthart

Review: Phil Williams

A. When the organization was formed + brief history
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fearing persecution under the Spanish Franco Regime in the 1930s, thousands of Basques fled to Latin America.¹• In 1959, shortly after the creation of ETA in Spain (Basque Fatherland and Liberty), a cell was formed in Venezuela. After 1959, there were two large waves of ETA members arriving in Venezuela “in the 1980s, from France and Algeria, and from Panama in 1990.”²• ETA is a nationalist separatist group from Spain seeking to create a homeland for Basques between Northern Spain and Southern France.
B. Types of illegal activities engaged in,
a. In general
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A 2010 Spanish judicial probe claimed ETA had received and given training at FARC camps inside Venezuela.³ Training included bomb making, urban warfare techniques, and information technology management.⁴ Spanish judicial reports have accused the Venezuelan government of involved with the abovementioned activities but the Venezuelan President has strongly denied these charges.⁵• A probe conducted by a Spanish High Court judge claimed ETA and FARC “wanted to mount attacks against Colombian senior officials, such as Colombian President Alvaro Uribe and his predecessor, Andres Pastrana” inside Spain.⁶
b. Specific detail: types of illicit trafficking activities engaged in
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• News reports indicate, that in exchange for training, FARC provided drugs to ETA which the latter sold in Spain.⁷• In date five ETA members were arrested by Spanish police in the Basque region of Spain with 39 bags of cocaine and material typically used to cut the drug, as well as two pistols and some explosives.⁸• According to Italian criminal mafia researcher Roberto Saviano, ETA "acts as a paramafiosa organization, but is justified as a political organization" and ETA traffics "with cocaine from the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) " to receive support and weapons from the Neapolitan Camorra."⁹
C. Scope and Size
a. Estimated size of network and membership
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• According to Spanish Court documents there are 50 ETA members in Venezuela.¹⁰
b. Countries / regions group is known to have operated in. (i.e. the group’s operating area)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Venezuela, Mexico, Spain.¹¹
D. Leader Characteristics
a. Who is/are the leader(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arturo Cubillas Fontan, an ethnic Basque was named as the leader of ETA in Venezuela by a 2010 Spanish judicial investigation.¹² Cubillas was allowed asylum in Venezuela after being deported from Algeria in 1989.¹³ In 2007, he was appointed as the security director at the National Land Institute, a Venezuelan government agency which oversees land expropriations.¹⁴

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mikel Kabikoitz Karrera Sarobe, (AKA: "Ata") former military head of ETA.¹⁵ • Francisco Javier Lopez Pena, (AKA:"Thierry") former head of ETA's political wing.¹⁶
b. Leadership timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found on ETA in Venezuela.
c. Leadership style (autocratic, diffuse, etc.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found on ETA in Venezuela.
E. Organizational Structure
a. Topology (cellular, hierarchical, etc.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
b. Membership – is there formal or informal membership in the organization or network? What role do informal or nonmembers play in trafficking and other criminal activities?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
c. Command and Control (decentralized or centralized)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
F. Resources
a. Financial
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found on ETA in Venezuela.
b. Human
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 2010 Spanish Report stated, Venezuelan governmental cooperation is being rendered to the collaboration between FARC and ETA.¹⁷ The report further indicated assistance from the Venezuelan military and intelligence branches.¹⁸
c. Logistical
i. Forgery, safe-houses, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found on ETA in Venezuela.
ii. Key routes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to Roberto Saviano, ETA receives cocaine from Colombian paramilitaries in South America, then moves the drugs to Portugal, and lastly the drugs are “carried” to Basque country.¹⁹
d. Transportation
i. Land
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found on ETA in Venezuela.
ii. Sea
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found on ETA in Venezuela.
iii. Air
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found on ETA in Venezuela.
iv. Intermodal container
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found on ETA in Venezuela.
G. Trafficking Methods and Modalities
a. Corruption
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found on ETA in Venezuela.
b. Concealment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found on ETA in Venezuela.
c. Deception

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found on ETA in Venezuela.
d. Circumvention (avoiding border entry points)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found on ETA in Venezuela.
H. Prior / Existing Relationships
a. Other criminal organizations (cooperative and conflictual)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FARC (cooperative): Spanish court documents claim that the two groups have worked together since 1993.²⁰ Both groups have engaged in training exercises in Venezuela and cooperate in “ explosive-handling, intelligence sharing, and surface-to-air missile-training seminars.”²¹ News reports, relying on interviews with former FARC paramilitaries, have confirmed that ETA has provided training to FARC.²² The Venezuelan state has denied these charges.²³ News reports indicate, that in exchange for training, FARC provided drugs to ETA which the latter sold in Spain.²⁴ Neapolitan Camorra (cooperative): According to Roberto Saviano, ETA receives drugs from Colombian paramilitaries and then sells these drugs to the Camorra in Spain in exchange for weaponry.²⁵ Specifically, Saviano refers to testimony by a former Camorra member who confirmed there was a 1999 deal between ETA and Camorra: “ETA is committed to ship cocaine through members of their organization in exchange for weapons of Neapolitan mafia, the only way to provide full arsenal of heavy weapons, high explosives and especially missile launchers.”²⁶
b. Corrupt politicians, law enforcement , political parties and other state entities, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Venezuelan state has at times allowed extradition and more recently has fought Spanish extradition efforts of ETA
c. <i>Specific detail: Any alliances / past dealings with terrorist groups.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As stated above, Spanish judicial accusations state ETA has a cooperative relationship with FARC, centered around training.
I. Ideological / Ethnic / Familial Orientation (if any)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National-Separatist: seeking to create a homeland for Basques between Northern Spain and Southern France Researcher Roberto Saviano argues that the organization is mainly criminal in nature now
J. Technical Sophistication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Testimony provided by former FARC members indicated that ETA members provided training “to perfect the manufacture of motorcycle and car bombs and the use of mobile telephones as timers.”²⁷
K. Penchant for Innovation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found on ETA in Venezuela.
L. Activities in United States
a. Includes both criminal and non-criminal activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found on ETA in Venezuela.
b. <i>Specific detail:</i> <i>Trafficking activities ; logistical activities</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found on ETA in Venezuela.
c. Linkages with US groups Market/transaction links
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found on ETA in Venezuela.

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Stable supplier
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found on ETA in Venezuela.
Franchise arrangement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found on ETA in Venezuela.
HQ and Branch office
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found on ETA in Venezuela.
M. Evaluations
a. Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This small branch of ETA has been able to find a generally safe host to operate from. "It's not the biggest ETA colony, but it is the most important one in qualitative terms."²⁸ According to Óscar Elía, an ETA expert "Venezuela is where [ETA] enjoy[s] the biggest liberty"²⁹ The ETA branch in Venezuela appears to have expertise in terrorist tactics and weaponry which it is leveraging for cash and drugs.
b. Weaknesses and Vulnerabilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With enough pressure from the international community Chavez might extradite a few ETA members and thus break linkages between ETA and its affiliates.
c. Additional insights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since FARC has been found to have possible trafficking connections with al Qaeda,³⁰ and ETA and FARC have a close relationship, ETA in Venezuela is an organization of interest. According to Roberto Saviano, ETA's political mission has been subordinated to making money through the drug trade. He states that of ETA's 1,000 members, most are involved in drug trafficking.³¹
N. Other Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">

1 Romero, Simon and Andres Cala, "Arrests in Europe Expose ETA's Ties to Venezuela," The New York Times, March 13, 2010. <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/14/world/americas/14venez.html>

2 Ibid.

3 Unattributed report. "ETA Members Receive Training at FARC Camps in Venezuela," Spanish newspaper ABC website, July 26, 2010.

4 "Spanish report says ETA computer experts could have trained Colombia's FARC," *BBC Monitoring Europe – Political*. January 12, 2011. and "Spanish court probing ETA-FARC ties hears witness identify link in Venezuela," *BBC Monitoring Europe*, February 11, 2011.

5 "Hugo Chávez denies that Eta terrorists were trained in Venezuela," *Guardian.CO.UK.*, (Source: *Reuters*), October 5, 2010. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/oct/05/hugo-chavez-denies-eta-venezuela-link>

6 Ibid.

7 Berti, Benedetta, "Colombia's FARC and the Basque ETA: Exploring the Tactical and Economic Partnership," *Terrorism Monitor* Volume: 7 Issue: 2, January 23, 2009.

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8 Delfin ,Marty, "FARC, ETA and Al Qaeda: the terror connection, *Iberosphere*, March 24th, 2010.
<http://iberosphere.com/2010/03/the-terror-connection-a-common-cause-for-the-farc-eta-and-al-qaeda/790>

9 "Saviano blemish to ETA 'organization paramafiosa' who 'traffics in cocaine,'" *El Mundo*, August 31, 2009.
<http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2009/08/31/cultura/1251735629.html>

10 "Venezuela offers sanctuary to 50 Basque terrorists, refuses to extradite leader," *BBC Monitoring Latin America*, April 21, 2011.

11Martinez, D., J. Pagola. "Basque militants seeking to establish bases in Latin America," *Spanish Daily*, November 16, 2007.

12 Romero, Simon and Andres Cala, "Arrests in Europe Expose ETA's Ties to Venezuela," *The New York Times*, March 13, 2010. <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/14/world/americas/14venez.html>

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 "Venezuela offers sanctuary to 50 Basque terrorists, refuses to extradite leader," *BBC Monitoring Latin America*, April 21, 2011.

16 "Venezuela offers sanctuary to 50 Basque terrorists, refuses to extradite leader," *BBC Monitoring Latin America*, April 21, 2011.

17 "Venezuela 'helped Eta and Farc'" *BBC News*, March 1, 2010. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8543349.stm>

18Ibid.

19"ETA Dope," *Cronica*, February 14, 2010.
<http://www.elmundo.es/suplementos/cronica/2010/748/1266102002.html>

20 "Venezuela 'helped Eta and Farc'" *BBC News*, March 1, 2010. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8543349.stm>

21 Ibid.

22 Berti , Benedetta, "Colombia's FARC and the Basque ETA: Exploring the Tactical and Economic Partnership," *Terrorism Monitor Volume: 7 Issue: 2, January 23, 2009*.
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<http://iberosphere.com/2010/03/the-terror-connection-a-common-cause-for-the-farc-eta-and-al-qaeda/790>

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