

Organization Attributes Sheet – Izmailovskaya

Author: McKenzie O'Brien

Review: Phil Williams

A. When the organization was formed + brief history
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anton Malevsky is believed to have founded Izmailovskaya, named after Izmailovo, a Moscow neighborhood in the late 1980s or early 1990s.¹• According to Spanish prosecutors, early on “the group specialized in extorting protection money and committing contract killings during the brutal struggles that followed the deregulation of the aluminum industry.”²• From there, the organization expanded and “worked for men who are now among Russia's richest oligarchs and invest their billions in Western construction outfits or companies in the automotive industry.”³
B. Types of illegal activities engaged in,
a. In general
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As pertains to Central America and the Caribbean: Drug Trafficking, Arms Trafficking, Extortion, Human Trafficking, Prostitution, Kidnapping, Fraud, and Money Laundering⁴• Globally: Drug Trafficking, Arms Trafficking, Contract Killing, Extortion, Human Trafficking, Prostitution, Kidnapping, Fraud, Auto Theft and Smuggling, Cargo Theft
b. <i>Specific detail: types of illicit trafficking activities engaged in</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drug Trafficking: According to Interpol, Izmailovskaya is actively trafficking drugs in Mexico⁵ and farther south into the “tri-border area” (TBA) of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay.⁶ Furthermore, sources have indicated that Russian criminal groups are the main “masterminds” or organizers, along with Italian criminal groups, for other external actors interested in moving drugs from Latin America.⁷• Arms Trafficking: According to Interpol, Izmailovskaya is actively trafficking arms in Mexico.⁸
C. Scope and Size
a. Estimated size of network and membership
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Although exact numbers are unavailable in recent open source information, the group’s myriad activities and areas of operation would indicate that size remains significant.
b. Countries / regions group is known to have operated in. (i.e. the group’s operating area)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As pertains to Central America and the Caribbean: Mexico,⁹ the “Tri-Border Area” of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay;¹⁰ Latin America and the Caribbean in general¹¹• Globally: Russian Federation, all of Eastern and Western Europe, Balkans, Central Asia, the United States, Israel, much of China, Japan, Malaysia, and Indonesia,¹² British Virgin Islands¹³
D. Leader Characteristics
a. Who is/are the leader(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is no information available from open sources as to who leads operations in Latin America. Anton Malevsky was the founder and leader of Izmailovskaya, until his death from an alleged parachuting accident in South Africa in 2001.¹⁴ One Alexander A. also appears to be a prominent figure, as he was put on trial in Germany for laundering about \$8 million for the group.¹⁵
b. Leadership timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anton Malevsky was the leader of Izmailovskaya from its founding in the late

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

1980s/early 1990s until his death from an alleged parachuting accident in South Africa in 2001.¹⁶

- Alexander A. might have taken over Malevsky's spot until his arrest in Spain in 2006.¹⁷
- It is unclear in open sources who at this time leads the group.

c. Leadership style (autocratic, diffuse, etc.)

- **Diffuse** – Most decisions appear to be spread among various levels of authority and various cells and nodes of the network.¹⁸

E. Organizational Structure

a. Topology (cellular, hierarchical, etc.)

- **Structured, but flexible, cellular network** – There is a degree of hierarchy in that some decisions appear to be made by certain key authorities within the group, but Izmailovskaya as a whole functions generally as a flexible network, with members/components allocated to diffuse areas and tasks that will make the group both more effective in its endeavors, and safer from law enforcement. Moreover, the group also employs cells, especially with regard to contingents operating outside the former Soviet Union. These cells, while loosely affiliated with the core, generally make their own decisions and operate autonomously.¹⁹

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?

- Information not found.

c. Command and Control (decentralized or centralized)

- **Decentralized** - Reports from Interpol and other law enforcement agencies indicate that Russian criminal organizations, including Izmailovskaya, are operating in Mexico through multiple small cells.²⁰

F. Resources

a. Financial

- **Significant financial resources.** The organization is believed by Spanish authorities to have worked for men who are now among Russia's richest oligarchs and to have invested billions in Western construction outfits or companies in the automotive industry.²¹ **Izmailovskaya is believed to control assets worth about \$800 million today.**²² Leader Malevsky moved part of this fortune to the British Virgin Islands, where it was invested in shady companies or deposited into the bank accounts of high-ranking Izmailovskaya members.²³ One Alexander A., who appears to be a prominent figure in Izmailovskaya, was put on trial in Germany for laundering about \$8 million for the group.²⁴ Prosecutors claim that Alexander A. siphoned off up to \$800,000 a month to pay his employees: According to the indictment, so-called soldiers of the Mafia received \$1,000 each, while "officers" were paid up to \$30,000. Investigators believe that about 250 families depended on Alexander A. financially.²⁵

b. Human

- **Significant human resources.** Izmailovskaya is a large group involved in numerous illicit activities. The group, therefore, has members of various specializations to increase success in its ventures.

c. Logistical

i. Forgery, safe-houses, etc.

- Information not found.

ii. Key routes

- Information not found.

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d.	Transportation
i.	Land
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found.
ii.	Sea
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to a Balkan crime expert, Russians, for whom Serbian and Montenegrin criminal groups reportedly work in Latin American drug trafficking, utilize “ocean-going vessels” in a “big system” to smuggle cocaine.²⁶
iii.	Air
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found.
iv.	Intermodal container
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found.
G. Trafficking Methods and Modalities	
a.	Corruption
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No information on use of corruption in Central America and the Caribbean, but Izmailovskaya and Russian groups are known to make extensive use of corruption in the former Soviet Union, Central Asia, and elsewhere.
b.	Concealment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found.
c.	Deception
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In order to maintain low profiles in Mexico, Russian groups often operate out of resorts [or hotels or houses] owned by their Mexican business partners.²⁷
d.	Circumvention (avoiding border entry points)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found.
H. Prior / Existing Relationships	
a.	Other criminal organizations (cooperative and conflictual)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mexican criminal organizations (highly cooperative) – According to Stratfor sources, “Links between Russian organized criminal groups and one or more of the principal Mexican criminal organizations have allowed the Russians to obtain and transport illicit narcotics at a low cost and under relatively secure circumstances for shipment to Europe and Russia. In order to maintain low profiles in Mexico, these groups often operate out of resorts [or hotels or houses] owned by their Mexican business partners.”²⁸ Colombian criminal organizations (cooperative) – possible cooperation in drug trafficking²⁹ Italian criminal organizations (particularly La Cosa Nostra and the Camorra) – possible cooperation in drug trafficking, money laundering and/or counterfeiting. With regard to the Camorra, The two groups appear to be cooperating in such ventures as gambling, prostitution, fraud and extortion.³⁰ Japanese Yakuza – possible cooperation in drug trafficking, money laundering and/or counterfeiting³¹ Chinese Triads – possible cooperation in drug trafficking, money laundering and/or counterfeiting³² Turkish criminal organizations – cooperation in drug trafficking³³ Balkan criminal organizations (including the Saric Group) – According to Balkan sources, Russians are often the “masterminds” or organizers of cocaine smuggling from Latin America, utilizing Balkan and other external criminal groups to smuggle cocaine from the region.³⁴

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<p>b. Corrupt politicians, law enforcement , political parties and other state entities, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russian political and security structures (at all levels) – One of the most significant sources of power for Russian organized crime is its connections within the government. There is no clear distinction in Russia between criminal enterprises and the government. In point of fact, criminal organizations and their leadership often have direct ties to oligarchs and others in positions of power.³⁵ • Russian financial magnate and oligarch Oleg Deripaska – allegedly has a close relationship with Izmailovskaya.³⁶ Deripaska is also linked to other prominent political figures such as former Russian president Boris Yeltsin and prominent criminal figures Mikhail and Lev Chernoy.³⁷ The Chernoy brothers might be/have been members of Izmailovskaya.³⁸
<p>c. <i>Specific detail: Any alliances / past dealings with terrorist groups.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no indication in open sources of past or present dealings and/or relationships with any known terrorist groups.
<p>I. Ideological / Ethnic / Familial Orientation (if any)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is significant to note that Russian criminal organizations such as Izmailovskaya do not always have ethnic orientations, unlike some other criminal groups from the former Soviet Union.
<p>J. Technical Sophistication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
<p>K. Penchant for Innovation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessed as innovative. This judgment is based upon the notion that Russian criminal organizations, including Izmailovskaya, have grown in terms of the number of illicit – and licit – activities they have engaged in over the past two decades, despite increased attention from various government, law enforcement, and academic entities.
<p>L. Activities in United States</p> <p>a. Includes both criminal and non-criminal activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Might include human trafficking/prostitution. <p>b. <i>Specific detail: trafficking activities ; logistical activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Human Trafficking/Prostitution:</i> The Bilateral Safety Corridor Coalition (BSCC) has noted that criminal gangs from Russia have been discovered attempting to traffic victims across the U.S.-Mexico border.³⁹ They have succeeded in some cases: Using Mexico as a transit point, Russian groups have moved East European/Russian victims to New York.⁴⁰ <p>c. Linkages with US groups</p> <p>i. Market/transaction links</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found. <p>ii. Stable supplier</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found. <p>iii. Franchise arrangement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found. <p>iv. HQ and Branch office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the United States, Russian groups are known to operate extensively in New York and the “tri-state” area in general (Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York).⁴¹
<p>M. Evaluations</p> <p>a. Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Resources – Extensive financial resources, generated from numerous illicit

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and legitimate sources, bring the group enormous financial power.

- **International criminal and political connections** – The group has strong cooperative ties to Mexican and possibly Colombian criminal organizations, among others, enhancing its power and capabilities in the region. A presence in numerous countries, in addition to ties to many criminal organizations across the world, gives the group considerable global power and capabilities. Connections to federal and local Russian government officials and agencies also give the group additional resources and protection.
- **Operational security (OPSEC) and denial, deception, and evasion measures** – Russian criminal groups, including Izmailovskaya, are exceptional at evading detection by hostile and inquisitive entities, likely through a combination of good operational security and measures taken to deny information to, deceive, and evade such authorities. **Relative to other large and powerful transnational criminal organizations, it is extremely difficult to find information, even dated, about this Russian group and others.** This problem is exacerbated in regions where investigators and journalists are not familiar with Russian organized crime.

b. Weaknesses and vulnerabilities

- Extent of operations, while a strength in many respects, also give the group a vulnerability and adds to the burden of OPSEC.

c. Additional insights

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Other Notes

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¹ “Germany Puts Suspected Russian Mafia Boss on Trial,” Hamburg *Spiegel Online*, August 14, 2007, OSC: EUP20070820072003.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Burton, Fred and Dan Burges. “Russian Organized Crime,” *Stratfor*, November 14, 2007.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Calderon, Horacio. “Organized Crime and Terrorism in the TBA and adjacent regions,” Buenos Aires *Impulso*, August 10, 2007. <http://www.impulsobaires.com.ar/nota.php?id=28292>.

⁷ “Crime Expert Nicovic Claims Russian Mafia Runs Drug Smuggling from South America,” Podgorica *Analitika*, November 18, 2010, OSC: EUP20101129023003.; and “Drug Boss Saric's Associate Jokovic Discloses Information on Cocaine Smuggling,” Podgorica *Revija D Online*, February 16-23, 2011, OSC: EUP20110225023001.

⁸ Burton and Burges.

⁹ Burton and Burges.; and Calderon.

¹⁰ Calderon.

¹¹ Burton and Burges.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ “Germany Puts Suspected Russian Mafia Boss on Trial,” OSC: EUP20070820072003.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Burton and Burges.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ “Germany Puts Suspected Russian Mafia Boss on Trial,” OSC: EUP20070820072003.

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- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Ibid.
- ²⁶ “Crime Expert Nicovic Claims Russian Mafia Runs Drug Smuggling from South America,” OSC: EUP20101129023003.
- ²⁷ Burton and Burges.
- ²⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ Ibid.
- ³⁴ “Crime Expert Nicovic Claims Russian Mafia Runs Drug Smuggling from South America,” OSC: EUP20101129023003.; and “Drug Boss Saric’s Associate Joksovic Discloses Information on Cocaine Smuggling,” OSC: EUP20110225023001.
- ³⁵ Burton and Burges.
- ³⁶ “Discussion Participants See Italian, Russian Mafia ‘Having Foothold’ in Austria,” Vienna *Der Standard*, June 30, 2010, OSC: EUP20100630085009.
- ³⁷ Ibid.
- ³⁸ “Mikhail Chernoy Activities, Criminal Investigations Surveyed,” Moscow *Compromat.ru*, April 28, 2008, OSC: CEP20080502316002.
- ³⁹ Seelke, Clare Ribando. “Trafficking in Persons in Latin America and the Caribbean,” *Congressional Research Service*, December 9, 2010.
- ⁴⁰ Lin Goh, Janice Phaik. “Deterritorialized Women in the Global City: An Analysis of Sex Trafficking in Dubai, Tokyo and New York,” *Intersections*, Spring 2009.
- ⁴¹ Finckenauer, James O., and Elin J. Waring. *Russian Mafia in America: Immigration, Culture, and Crime* (Boston: Northeastern University, 1998).