

Organization Attributes Sheet: Jose Maria Figueiro Gomes Gang

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A. When the organization was formed + brief history

- Jose Maria Figueiro Gomes operated an international cocaine trafficking organization based in the Northern Amazon region of Brazil from the mid 1990's until 2005.¹
- "The King of Cocaine in the North" as authorities came to know him by, owned a number of fishing vessels and a transportation company through which his gang smuggled cocaine to Europe.²
- Gomes was arrested by Brazilian federal police in 2005. The operation named "Pescador" ultimately halted his trafficking operation.³
- Gomes and other gang members were sentenced in federal court in 2007 for the crime of smuggling narcotics. Gomes received a sentence of 49 years in prison.⁴

B. Types of illegal activities engaged in,

- a. In general
 - Drug trafficking.
- b. *Specific detail: types of illicit trafficking activities engaged in*
 - Trafficking operations utilized a variety of routes whereby cocaine shipments ultimately ended up in Portugal and Spain for distribution into the European continent.⁵
 - Gomes owned a transportation busing company and a number of legitimate fishing vessels which were used to transport cocaine from his farm in the Northern Amazon region of Brazil to Brazilian ports or ports in Venezuela and Suriname.⁶
 - Cocaine shipments were then loaded onto cargo ships and hidden in containers bound for Spain or Portugal.⁷
 - Gang members also operated import/export businesses through which they bought Brazilian products and shipped them along with cocaine that was hidden in the containers bound for Europe.⁸

C. Scope and Size

- a. Estimated size of network and membership
 - From accounts, it can be determined that primary membership was relatively small because only four others were arrested with Gomes for taking part in the smuggling operation; but the informal network was likely larger.⁹
- b. Countries / regions group is known to have operated in. (i.e. the group's operating area)
 - Northern Amazon region of Brazil (mainly Manaus), Venezuela, Suriname, Portugal, Spain.

D. Leader Characteristics

- a. Who is/are the leader(s)
 - Jose Maria Figueiro Gomes – leader.
- b. Leadership timeline
 - Gomes became wanted by Brazilian authorities in 1995.
 - Gomes arrested in 2005.
- c. Leadership style (autocratic, diffuse, etc.)
 - Appears to be autocratic.

E. Organizational Structure

- a. Topology (cellular, hierarchical, etc.)

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

- Hierarchical with Gomes at the top giving orders to transporters at the bottom.
- 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?
- Formal as gang members appear to have worked directly with Gomes in transportation efforts; but informal membership likely also played a role as the operation depended on legitimate transportation such as fishing vessels and buses.
- c. Command and Control (decentralized or centralized)
- It seems that command was centralized and Gomes ran the entire operation.

F. Resources

- a. Financial
 - Large shipments of cocaine earned group considerable wealth as it was reported that the gang shipped close to 3 metric tons of cocaine abroad while it was in operation.¹⁰
 - Use of legitimate businesses to cover up smuggling profits.
- b. Human
 - Transporters.
- c. Logistical
 - i. Forgery, safe-houses, etc.
 - Farm owned by Gomes was used as a staging point.
 - ii. Key routes
 - Overland routes from Manaus to different ports in Brazil, Venezuela, and Suriname.
 - River routes from Manaus to different ports in Brazil, Venezuela, and Suriname.
 - Trans-Atlantic route from ports in South America to Portugal and Spain.
 - iii. Transportation
 - i. Land
 - Use of legitimate buses that were part of Gomes's transportation company, Transximango, to transport cocaine to various ports.¹¹
 - ii. Sea
 - Use of legitimate fishing vessels to transport cocaine through Brazilian rivers to various South American ports.
 - iii. Air
 - Packages were sometimes dropped off the coast of Suriname by suppliers and were picked up by fishing vessels owned by Gomes.¹²
 - iv. Intermodal container
 - Cocaine was hidden in containers aboard cargo ships bound for Europe.

G. Trafficking Methods and Modalities

- a. Corruption
 - Information not found.
- b. Concealment
 - Cocaine was hidden in cargo containers aboard ships.
- c. Deception
 - Use of legitimate buses and fishing vessels to transport cocaine.
 - Transportation businesses were placed in Gomes's sister's name to avoid suspicion.¹³
 - Use of fake import/export businesses.
- d. Circumvention (avoiding border entry points)
 - Information not found.

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

H. Prior / Existing Relationships
a. Other criminal organizations (cooperative and conflictual) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
b. Corrupt politicians, law enforcement , political parties and other state entities, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links were made between Gomes and Dr. Farias, the mayor of Alenquer, Brazil. The mayor gave non-competitive bids to Gomes's transportation company Transximango, but it is unclear whether the mayor knew of the smuggling operation.¹⁴
c. <i>Specific detail: Any alliances / past dealings with terrorist groups.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No connections were determined.
I. Ideological / Ethnic / Familial Orientation (if any)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gomes's family members were involved in the operation including his wife, sister, and brother, all of whom were convicted of smuggling narcotics.¹⁵
J. Technical Sophistication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cocaine was hidden in the fuel tanks of buses and fishing vessels.
K. Pechant for Innovation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low – concealment of drugs in fuel tanks is not something new. Moreover, smuggling drugs inside of cargo containers is not new.
L. Activities in United States
a. Includes both criminal and non-criminal activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
b. <i>Specific detail: trafficking activities ; logistical activities</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
c. Linkages with US groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Market/transaction links <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found. ii. Stable supplier <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found. iii. Franchise arrangement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found. iv. HQ and Branch office <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
M. Evaluations
a. Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of legitimate businesses to deceive authorities was a strength of the trafficking operation.
b. Weaknesses and vulnerabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low sophistication and innovation resulted in the disruption of the trafficking operation.
c. Additional insights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Other Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The smuggling ring no longer poses a threat due to the fact that most, if not all, the members received lengthy prison sentences.

¹⁴ "Drug Runner Routes in Amazonas Outlined," *A Critica* (Internet Version-WWW) in Portuguese, October 22, 2005, OSC: LAP20051024020002

² A Critica

³ A Critica

⁴ Monte. "Figueiro Sentenced to 49 Years Imprisonment." *UOL Blog*. Mariean Monte, 3 Aug 2007: Web. 23 May 2011. http://marjeanmonte.zip.net/arch2007-03-04_2007-03-10.html

⁵ A Critica

⁶ A Critica

⁷ "PF arrested leader of largest drug trafficking gang in North." *Portal Amazonia* 7 Oct 2005: Web. 23 May 2011. <http://portalamazonia.globo.com/new-structure/view/scripts/noticias/noticia.php?id=26408>

⁸ Portal Amazonia

⁹ A Critica

¹⁰ A Critica

¹¹ Monte. "Fraud and Procurement." UOL Blog. Mariean Monte, 8 Dec 2006: Web. 23 May 2011.

http://marjeanmonte.zip.net/arch2006-08-06_2006-08-12.html#2006_08-12_13_20_51-8695642-0

¹² A Critica

¹³ Monte. "Fraud and Procurement." UOL Blog. Mariean Monte, 8 Dec 2006: Web. 23 May 2011.

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¹⁵ Monte. "Figueiro Sentenced to 49 Years Imprisonment." *UOL Blog*. Mariean Monte, 3 Aug 2007: Web. 23 May 2011. http://marjeanmonte.zip.net/arch2007-03-04_2007-03-10.html