

Organization Attributes Sheet – Podolskaya

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A. When the organization was formed + brief history
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formed in the 1980s, at the same time as many other current Russian criminal groups.¹• Named after Podolsk, a suburban-like neighborhood of Moscow, from where original members of the group hailed.²• The “podol’skie went through the same evolution as many other similar organizations. They took control of the local market, trades, and businesses, consolidating power in the locale and expanding beyond it. The ability to maintain order and to give generously to charity (the khoziain attitude) brought the violent entrepreneurs popular support: Lalakin ‘Lutchok’ was made an honorary citizen of Podol’sk, and Ivaniuzhenkov (‘Rotan’) was elected to the Moscow oblast’ legislature in 1997.”³ In 1999, Ivaniuzhenkov was appointed to the ministry.⁴
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, Credit Card Fraud,⁵ and Money Laundering⁶• 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, Podolskaya is actively trafficking drugs in Mexico.⁷ 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.⁸• Arms Trafficking: According to Interpol, Podolskaya is actively trafficking arms in Mexico.⁹
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;¹⁰ Latin America and the Caribbean in general.¹¹• Globally: Russian Federation, all of Eastern and Western Europe, Balkans, Central Asia, the United States, Israel, much of China, Japan, Malaysia, and Indonesia¹²
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. However, ““In police files, [Boris] Ivaniuzhenkov is known as ‘Rotan,’ the right-hand man of Sergei Lalakin (‘Lutchok’), the leader of the Podol’skaya criminal group.”¹³
b. Leadership timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lalakin ‘Lutchok’ was made an honorary citizen of Podol’sk, and Ivaniuzhenkov (‘Rotan’) was elected to the Moscow oblast’ legislature in 1997.”¹⁴ In 1999,

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

Ivaniuzhenkov was appointed to the ministry.¹⁵

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

- **Diffuse** – While some decisions are made at the “core” of the group, in general, decisions tend to be spread among various levels of authority and various cells and nodes of the network.¹⁶

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 Podolskaya 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, but also safer from law enforcement. Moreover, the group also employs cells, especially with regard to contingents operating further from the former Soviet Union. These cells, while loosely affiliated with the core, generally make their own decisions and operate autonomously.¹⁷

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 Podolskaya, are operating in Mexico through multiple small cells.¹⁸

F. Resources

a. Financial

- **Significant financial resources.** Podolskaya is a large group involved in numerous illicit activities, in addition to legitimate business ventures.¹⁹ The group, therefore, undoubtedly has significant financial resources at its disposal.

b. Human

- **Significant human resources.** Podolskaya 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.

d. Transportation

i. Land

- Information not found.

ii. Sea

- According to a Balkan crime expert, Russians, for whom Serbian and Montenegrin criminal groups reportedly work beneath in Latin American drug trafficking, utilize “oceangoing vessels” in a “big system” to smuggle cocaine.²⁰

iii. Air

- Information not found.

iv. Intermodal container

- Information not found.

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

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 Podolskaya and Russian groups are known to make extensive use of corruption in the former Soviet Union, Central Asia,
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.²¹
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.”²² Colombian criminal organizations (cooperative) – might be cooperation in drug trafficking²³ Italian criminal organizations (particularly La Cosa Nostra and the Camorra) – there might be degrees of 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.²⁴ Japanese Yakuza – there might be some degree of cooperation in drug trafficking, money laundering and/or counterfeiting²⁵ Chinese Triads – possibly some cooperation in drug trafficking, money laundering and/or counterfeiting²⁶ Turkish criminal organizations – cooperation in drug trafficking²⁷ Balkan criminal organizations (including the Saric Group) – According to Balkan sources, Russians might be the “masterminds” or organizers of cocaine smuggling from Latin America, dealing with Balkan and other external criminal groups wishing to smuggle cocaine from the region.²⁸
b.	Corrupt politicians, law enforcement , political parties and other state entities, etc.
	<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 connection with government. There is often no clear distinction in Russia between criminal enterprises and the government and criminal organizations and their leaders often have direct ties to oligarchs and others in positions of power.²⁹
c.	<i>Specific detail: Any alliances / past dealings with terrorist groups.</i>
	<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.
I. Ideological / Ethnic / Familial Orientation (if any)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is significant to note that Russian criminal organizations such as Podolskaya do not always have ethnic orientations, unlike some other criminal groups from the former Soviet Union.
J. Technical Sophistication	

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.
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- Information not found.

K. **Penchant for Innovation**

- **Assessed as innovative.** This judgment is based upon the notion that Russian criminal organizations, including Podolskaya, 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.

L. **Activities in United States**

a. Includes both criminal and non-criminal activities

- Podolskaya allegedly has operations within the United States.³⁰ This could include possible human trafficking/prostitution.

b. *Specific detail: trafficking activities ; logistical activities*

- *Human Trafficking/Prostitution:* 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.³¹ They have succeeded in some cases: Using Mexico as a transit point, Russian groups have moved East European/Russian victims to New York.³²

c. Linkages with US groups

i. Market/transaction links

- Information not found.

ii. Stable supplier

- Information not found.

iii. Franchise arrangement

- Information not found.

iv. HQ and Branch office

- 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).³³

M. **Evaluations**

a. Strengths

- **Financial Resources** – Extensive financial resources, generated from numerous illicit 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 a degree of global power and capabilities. Connections to federal and local Russian government officials and apparatuses also give the group additional resources as well as protection.
- **Operational security (OPSEC) and denial, deception, and evasion measures** – Russian criminal groups, including Podolskaya, are exceptional at evading detection by hostile and inquisitive entities, likely through a combination of good operational security and measures taken to deny information, deceive, and evade such authorities. **Relative to other large and powerful transnational criminal organizations, it is extremely difficult to find specific information, even dated, about this Russian group and others.** This problem is exacerbated the further one moves from the former Soviet Union, where investigators and journalists are less familiar with Russian organized crime.

b. Weaknesses and vulnerabilities

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

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

c. Additional insights

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Other Notes

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¹ Volkov, Vadim. *Violent Entrepreneurs: The Use of Force in the Making of Russian Capitalism* (New York: Cornell University, 2002), 67.

² Ibid., 68.

³ Ibid., 187.

⁴ Ibid., 187.

⁵ La Jeunesse, William and Maxim Lott. "The Myth of 90 Percent: Only a Small Fraction of Guns in Mexico Come From U.S.," *Fox News*, April 2, 2009.; and Burton, Fred and Dan Burges. "Russian Organized Crime," *Stratfor*, November 14, 2007.

⁶ Galeotti, Mark. "Organized Crime Gangs Pose Threat to Cuban Development," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, February 2006.

⁷ La Jeunesse and Lott.

⁸ "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 Joksovic Discloses Information on Cocaine Smuggling," *Podgorica Revija D Online*, February 16-23, 2011, OSC: EUP20110225023001.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Galeotti.; and La Jeunesse and Lott.

¹¹ Burton and Burges.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Volkov, 187.

¹⁴ Ibid., 187.

¹⁵ Ibid., 187.

¹⁶ Burton and Burges.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Volkov, 187.

²⁰ "Crime Expert Nicovic Claims Russian Mafia Runs Drug Smuggling from South America," OSC: EUP20101129023003.

²¹ Burton and Burges.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ "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.

²⁹ Burton and Burges.

³⁰ Finckenauer, James O., and Elin J. Waring. *Russian Mafia in America: Immigration, Culture, and Crime* (Boston: Northeastern University, 1998), 124.

³¹ Seelke, Clare Ribando. "Trafficking in Persons in Latin America and the Caribbean," *Congressional Research Service*, December 9, 2010.

³² Lin Goh, Janice Phaik. "Deterritorialized Women in the Global City: An Analysis of Sex Trafficking in Dubai, Tokyo and New York," *Intersections*, Spring 2009.

³³ Finckenaer and Waring.