

Organization: Rodrigues Cocaine Trafficking Group

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A. When the organization was formed + brief history

- The Rodrigues cocaine trafficking group was busted during a Canadian counter-- narcotics initiative, Project Falcon. The project targeted criminal enterprises and those transporting cocaine to street gang members and drug abusers in the region of Durham, Canada.¹ The group had four key members: Reginald Rodrigues, Mahendrapaul Doodnauth, Indarpaul Moninlall Doodnauth, and Amalek Orlando Watson.² Cocaine was carefully packed into the corrugated panels of cardboard boxes filled with pepper sauce and shipped to a legitimate company owned by Mahendrapaul Doodnauth, the Caribbean International Food Distributors.³ In order to fool customs officials, fake taxpayer identification numbers were used and an unspecified front company was formed.⁴ The Rodrigues cocaine trafficking group might be connected to another cocaine trafficking group in the area whose operations are very similar.

B. Types of illegal activities engaged in,

a. In general

- Drug trafficking

b. Specific detail: types of illicit trafficking activities engaged in

- On December 8, 2008, a vessel in New Brunswick was found to be carrying 276 kilos of 77-79% pure cocaine which was placed in cardboard dividers of boxes of pepper sauce. It would be delivered to a rented storage facility where it would be picked up in Etoicoke, Ontario by the owner of Caribbean International Food Distributors, Mahendrapaul Doodnauth.⁵
- On December 24, 2008 a vessel containing 100 kilos of cocaine destined for Caribbean International Food Distributors was intercepted in St. Croix by US federal agents.⁶
- Criminal network that transports cocaine to street gang member and drug abusers in the Durham region⁷

C. Scope and Size

a. Estimated size of network and membership

- Information not found, however, membership believed to be small.

b. Countries / regions group is known to have operated in. (i.e. the group's operating area)

- Operates in Guyana and Ontario, Canada.⁸

D. Leader Characteristics

a. Who is/are the leader(s)

- Might be linked to an unspecified drug kingpin held in the US.⁹
- There are four key members who appear to run the operation together. Reginald Rodrigues operates Rodrigues Tropical Export Co, Ltd¹⁰ and exported cocaine to Caribbean International Food Distributors.¹¹ This company is owned by Mahendrapaul Doodnauth who received the cocaine shipments.¹² Indarpaul Moninlall Doodnauth (also known as Teddy)¹³ and Amalek Orlando Watson were the middlemen in the operation¹⁴ and packed cocaine into the boxes.¹⁵ Rodrigues appeared to be the defacto leader.

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

b.	Leadership timeline
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> December 8, 2008, 276kg of cocaine was seized¹⁶ December 19, 2008 Mahendrapaul Doodnauth was arrested and charged¹⁷ December 24, 2008 a vessel containing 100 kilos of cocaine was seized¹⁸
c.	Leadership style (autocratic, diffuse, etc.)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found
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"> Financed by “a coterie of shady characters and persons with criminal antecedents.”¹⁹
b.	Human
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found
c.	Logistical
	i. Forgery, safe-houses, etc.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found
	ii. Key routes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shipment from Guyana to St. John, New Brunswick, Canada via St. Croix, US Virgin Islands.²⁰ Due to the unmonitored boat traffic between Guyana and Venezuela, Guyana Customs Anti-Narcotics Unit believed the cocaine comes from Venezuela via the Pomeroun.²¹
d.	Transportation
	i. Land
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found
	ii. Sea
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transported cocaine in freight containers on shipping vessels (Tropic Canada).²² A local who owned and had a registered fishing trawler was caught shipping cocaine from Venezuela to Guyana.²³
	iii. Air
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found
	iv. Intermodal container
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Padded freight containers²⁴
G. Trafficking Methods and Modalities	
a.	Corruption
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to a blogspot, <i>PPC=Mirror, PNC=Kaieteur, News & AFC= Stabroek News</i>,

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Reginald Rodrigues played a major financial role in AFC's 2006 election campaign and was present at Alliance For Change (AFC) 2011 election kickoff.²⁵ The People's Progressive Party (PPP) has also accused the AFC of being financed by Rodrigues.²⁶

b. Concealment

- 180 gram packs were hidden inside cardboard dividers of food seasoning²⁷ and pepper sauce.²⁸

c. Deception

- Deficiencies in customs documentation.²⁹
- Fake taxpayer identification number and the use of a front company.³⁰
- Duplication of papers.³¹

d. Circumvention (avoiding border entry points)

- Information not found

H. Prior / Existing Relationships

a. Other criminal organizations (cooperative and conflictual)

- Indarpaul Doodnauth is acquainted with Robin Barakat (also known as Salim Paul) who owns a pawn shop in Georgetown, Guyana.³² Barakat is suspected to be a leader of another cocaine ring whose operations are similar to that of Rodrigues.³³ Barakat's lawyer, Vic Puran, is also the lawyer of Nymrod Singh another central suspect in the cocaine ring Barakat is allegedly involved.³⁴ The Singh-Barakat cocaine ring is suspected of shipping cocaine hidden in furniture from Guyana to Canada via Miami, a shipment which was arranged by a customs broker using a front company.³⁵ Rodrigues' lawyer was also Vic Puran.³⁶ The fact that all these suspects have the same lawyer and run similar operations suggests there might be a connection between the two groups.

b. Corrupt politicians, law enforcement, political parties and other state entities, etc.

- According to a blogspot, *PPC=Mirror, PNC=Kaieteur, News & AFC= Stabroek News*, Reginald Rodrigues played a major financial role in AFC's 2006 election campaign and was present at Alliance For Change (AFC) 2011 election kickoff.³⁷ The People's Progressive Party has also accused the AFC of being financed by Rodrigues.³⁸

c. Specific detail: Any alliances / past dealings with terrorist groups.

- Information not found but nothing to suggest any dealings

I. Ideological / Ethnic / Familial Orientation (if any)

- Information not found

J. Technical Sophistication

- Packaging cocaine shipments. According to Mike Weles, Durham Police Service Chief Constable, "Our partners in Canada Border Services haven't seen this level of sophistication in terms of packaging."³⁹

K. Penchant for Innovation

- Information not found

L. Activities in United States

a. Includes both criminal and non-criminal activities

- Information not found

b. Specific detail: trafficking activities ; logistical activities

- Information not found

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

c.	Linkages with US groups
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"> Has connections to political parties which allow them to bypass customs officials.⁴⁰ The formation of legitimate companies (Caribbean International Food Distributors⁴¹ and Rodrigues Tropical Export Co, Ltd⁴²) provides an excellent cover to transport cocaine into Canada. High level of sophistication in terms of packaging Ships high quality cocaine that is cut for street level sale thereby increasing cocaine revenue and quantity.
b.	Weaknesses and vulnerabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two major shipments of cocaine were seized leading to the custody of several key members as well as charges against Mahendrapaul Doodnauth, leaving the group vulnerable.⁴³ This event could tarnish the group's reputation and possibly end the relationship with the financiers.
c.	Additional insights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Rodrigues trafficking group is a small but tightly knit organization with excellent financial resources. Due to the lack of reporting, it appears that after the two major busts the group has yet to reestablish itself. It could, however, be keeping a low profile and working underground. Rodrigues was interrogated and released in 2009 after the busts⁴⁴ and maintained ties to the AFC in 2011.⁴⁵ This suggests Rodrigues is looking to reestablish illegal operations soon. However, it is likely that large-scale operations will take a couple years to develop. There are other cocaine trafficking networks operating in a similar manner as the Rodrigues group. It is possible that the Rodrigues group is one cell in a larger, more extensive organization.
Other Notes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rodrigues was deported to Guyana from the United States in 2001, after a three-year sentence in jail for conspiracy to import cocaine.⁴⁶ 	

¹ "Cocaine Coming Mainly Via Venezuela –CANU," *Stabroek News*, January 5, 2009, Retrieved online at: www.stabroeknews.com

² Ibid.

³ "Exporter Wanted for Questioning about Drug Finds," *Stabroek News*, December 30, 2008, OSC: LAP20090101334002.

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- ⁴ "Cocaine Coming Mainly Via Venezuela –CANU," *Stabroek News*, January 05, 2009, Retrieved online at: www.stabroeknews.com
- ⁵ "Cocaine Shipped From Guyana Coming Mainly From Venezuela: CANU," *The West Indian News*, January 12, 2009, Retrieved online at: www.thewestindiannews.com
- ⁶ *ibid*
- ⁷ "Cocaine Coming Mainly Via Venezuela –CANU," *Stabroek News*, January 5, 2009, Retrieved online at: www.stabroeknews.com
- ⁸ *ibid*.
- ⁹ Khan, Sharief, "CANU Uncovers Cocaine Ring Links to Known Drug Baron," *Guyana Chronicle*, January 4, 2009, Retrieved online at: www.guyanachronicle.com
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- ¹¹ "Exporter Wanted for Questioning about Drug Finds," *Stabroek News*, December 30, 2008, OSC: LAP20090101334002
- ¹² "Guyana: CANU Agents Investigate 'Ghost' Shipping Firm Tied to Cocaine Find," *Georgetown Guyana Chronicle*, January 01, 2009, OSC: LAP200901023334003.
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- ²⁴ "Local Police Want Albouystown Man," *Kaieteur News*, December 30, 2008, Retrieved online at: www.kaieteurnewsonline.com
- ²⁵ "Local Drug Lords Attend AFC 2011," *PPC=Mirror, PNC=Kaieteur, News & AFC= Stabroek News*, January 30, 2011, Retrieved online at: <http://liveinguyana.blogspot.com/2011/01/local-drug-lords-attend-afc-2011.html>
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- ²⁸ "Huge Cocaine find in Guyana Pepper Sauce Boxes," *Stabroek News*, December 24, 2008, Retrieved online at: www.stabroeknews.com

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