

Organization: San Marcos DTO, Juan Alberto Ortiz Lopez (AKA Chamale)

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A. When the organization was formed + brief history

- For over 25 years, Juan Alberto Ortiz aka “Chamale” has been in the illicit drug business.¹ Authorities estimate Chamale’s fortune at \$100 million or 800 million quetzals.² He is known as the “Heroin King” because he cultivated poppy and then trafficked heroin in San Marcos, Mexico and to the United States.³ In 2009, he was accused of shipping 3,000 kilos of cocaine via small fishing boats.⁴ He owns the majority of the farms in San Marcos and controlled the cultivation and production of poppies and marijuana.⁵ His power was largely concentrated in San Martin municipality.⁶
- It is not entirely clear which drug trafficking groups were working for or with the Chamale. His operations extend to the southern coast of Guatemala and into areas of Honduras.⁷ Chamale has supplied the Sinaloa DTO with large shipments of cocaine by sea.⁸ One of his known partners was Mauro Salomon Ramirez Barrios, the leader of the Ramirez DTO. Ramirez was arrested in October 2010, five months before Chamale’s arrest.⁹
- Ortiz owns 25 farms in Mexico, ten homes in Guatemala, a ranch in El Valle, the Diamantv cable company and is “believed to control a radio station, a bus company, a hydroelectric power plant, construction companies, cattle ranches, hotels and restaurants.”¹⁰ Shipments are stored at farms and then transported at the right time.¹¹ In areas where Chamale operated, locals are loyal to the kingpin because he provided jobs, healthcare, and sports fields.¹² He was one of the most wanted persons by the United States because of his ties with Colombian and Mexican drug traffickers.¹³ On March 30, 2011, Ortiz was arrested in Quetzaltenango. The day after his arrest over 3,000 people came from over five towns in San Marcos protesting his arrest and demanding his release.¹⁴ He won the hearts and minds of the people.
- “Ortiz established his own evangelic church and is suspected of financing religious organizations in Nicaragua and Mexico as well as having great influence over local authorities in San Marcos.”¹⁵

B. Types of illegal activities engaged in,

a. In general

- Cultivating, smuggling, storing and selling cocaine, marijuana, and black tar heroin

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

- In charge of the supply of significant amounts of cocaine and black tar heroin into Mexico and the United States.¹⁶
- Coordinating large shipments of cocaine by sea from Colombia.¹⁷
- Cultivating marijuana and poppy production

C. Scope and Size

a. Estimated size of network and membership

- The size of the DTO is unknown. However, Chamale had 800 guards protecting his properties and had at least 200 body-guards; he did not travel alone.¹⁸

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

- Regions: San Marcos, San Martin, Malacatán and Tecun Uman.¹⁹
- Countries: Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and United States.²⁰

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.
All research conducted according to the project manual.

D. Leader Characteristics	
a.	Who is/are the leader(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Juan Alberto Ortiz Chamale.
b.	Leadership timeline
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found
c.	Leadership style (autocratic, diffuse, etc.)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Autocratic
E. Organizational Structure	
a.	Topology (cellular, hierarchical, etc.)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hierarchical: Chamale's Lieutenants were Gerson Leonardo Paz and Otto Leonel Mazariegos.²¹ These two were arrested with Chamale in March 2011.
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"> Formal membership: those who work and control direct aspects of drug operations. Informal membership: Chamale worked with local fishermen to smuggle cocaine into northern Mexico.²²
c.	Command and Control (decentralized or centralized)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centralized
F. Resources	
a.	Financial
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantial resources
b.	Human
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chamale worked with local fishermen to smuggle cocaine into northern Mexico.²³
c.	Logistical
i.	Forgery, safe-houses, etc.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Shipments that arrive at the coast by launch or ship are brought ashore and warehoused on those farms to await the best moment for crossing the border into Chiapas."²⁴
ii.	Key routes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pacific Coast from Colombia to Guatemala, Mexico and the United States
d.	Transportation
i.	Land
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guatemala to Chiapas
ii.	Sea
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cocaine shipments by sea²⁵
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"> "Ortiz... ha[s] great influence over local authorities in San Marcos."²⁶ For ten years Ortiz was involved with drug trafficking and the Guatemalan courts did not issue a warrant for his arrest.²⁷ Bribed local law enforcement.²⁸
b.	Concealment

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fishing boats
c. Deception
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found
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"> Sinaloa, Colombian supplier, Ramirez DTO
b. Corrupt politicians, law enforcement, political parties and other state entities, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ortiz was involved in drug operations for over ten years and the Guatemalan courts never issued an arrest warrant.²⁹ Bribed local law enforcement.³⁰
c. <i>Specific detail: Any alliances / past dealings with terrorist groups.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found
I. Ideological / Ethnic / Familial Orientation (if any)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chamale is a Christian and has built many churches. Narco-ballads have been written about him.
J. Technical Sophistication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not evident
K. Penchant for Innovation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low
L. Activities in United States
a. Includes both criminal and non-criminal activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trafficking cocaine, heroin and marijuana
b. <i>Specific detail: trafficking activities ; logistical activities</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found
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"> Chamale owns the majority of San Marcos and cultivates the poppy and marijuana in the area. For over a decade he has had a monopoly on the San Marcos supply. Locals are compelled to support him despite rumors that he is violent, arrogant, authoritarian and engages in illicit operations.³¹ He has a significant degree of popular support.
b. Weaknesses and vulnerabilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> He was arrested five months after his close associate Ramirez Barrio. These two had a significant impact on drug smuggling from Colombia via the Pacific coast to Mexico and the United States.

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All research conducted according to the project manual.

c. Additional insights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The arrest of Chamale and Ramirez opens up territory and is likely to create a power vacuum. According to the Guatemalan newspaper, <i>Plaza Publica</i> a series of murders were committed after the two major drug traffickers were arrested as part of a struggle for power.
Other Notes

¹ "Guatemala: Drug Boss Juan Alberto Ortiz's Fortune Estimated at \$100 Million," *Prensa Libre*, April 4, 2011, OSC:FEA20110406016493.

² Ibid.

³ Pachico, Elyssa, "Top Guatemalan Drug Trafficker Arrested," *In Sight*, March 31, 2011.

<http://www.insightcrime.org/insight-latest-news/item/728-top-guatemala-drug-trafficker-arrested>

⁴ Pachico, Elyssa, "Guatemalan Drug Lord, Lover of Horses, Beloved by Fishermen," *In Sight*, May 04, 2011.

<http://insightcrime.org/insight-latest-news/item/866-guatemalan-drug-lord-lover-of-horses-beloved-by-fishermen>

⁵ "Juan Chamale," *In Sight*, <http://insightcrime.org/personalities/guatemala/juan-chamale>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ "Highlights: Central America Media," *Presnsa Libre*, April 4. 2011, OSC: LAP20110404026001.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ "Guatemala: Lorenzana Case Arrest Delay, Land Dispute Matter Addressed," *Plaza Publica*, April 29, 2011, OSC: LAP 20110506369001.

¹⁰ "Highlights: Central America Media," *Presnsa Libre*, April 4. 2011, OSC: LAP20110404026001.

¹¹ "Guatemala: Drug Traffickers Forcing Owners To Sell Farms Along Mexican Border," *Prensa Libre*, December 07, 2008, OSC: LAP20081209026001.

¹² "Guatemala: Lorenzana Case Arrest Delay, Land Dispute Matter Addressed," *Plaza Publica*, April 29, 2011, OSC: LAP 20110506369001.

¹³ "Guatemala: Drug Trafficker Said to Have Split Personality," *El Periodico*, March 31, 2011, OSC: FEA20110408016589.

¹⁴ "Guatemala: Thousands March in San Marcos In Support of Alleged Drug Trafficker," *Prensa Libre* (Internet Version-WWW) in Spanish, March 31, 2011, OSC: LAP20110401026001.

¹⁵ "Highlights: Central America Media," *Presna Libre*, April 4,2011, OSC: LAP20110404026001.

¹⁶ "Guatemala: Cartel Bribed Military Commanders To Transport Narcotics Into Mexico," *Prensa Libre*, January 26, 2007,OSC: LAP20070126026003.

¹⁷ "Guatemala: Drug Trafficker Said to Have Split Personality," *El Periodico*, March 31, 2011, OSC: FEA20110408016589.

¹⁸ "Highlights: Central America Media," *Central America-OSC Summary*, April 2-4, 2011, OSC: LAP20110404026001.

¹⁹ "A Deputy Appears to be the Head of a Cartel of Drug Traffickers in Guatemala," *El Faro*, March 26,2007.

<http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=es&u=http://www.radiolaprimerisima.com/noticias/11624&ei=CzRTcOUFarY0QH42eiRDg&sa=X&oi=translate&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CCAQ7gEwAA&prev=/search%3Fq%3DLuciano%2BCartel%2BGuatemala%26hl%3Den%26client%3Dfirefox-a%26hs%3DJN3%26rls%3Dorg.mozilla:en-US:official%26prmd%3Ddivns>

²⁰ "Guatemala: Drug Trafficker Said to Have Split Personality," *El Periodico*, Open Source Center # FEA20110408016589, March 31, 2011.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Pachico, Elyssa, "Guatemalan Drug Lord, Lover of Horses, Beloved by Fishermen ," *In Sight*, May 04, 2011.

<http://insightcrime.org/insight-latest-news/item/866-guatemalan-drug-lord-lover-of-horses-beloved-by-fishermen>

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ "Guatemala: Drug Traffickers Forcing Owners To Sell Farms Along Mexican Border," *Prensa Libre*, December 07, 2008, OSC: LAP20081209026001.

²⁵ "Guatemala: Drug Trafficker Said to Have Split Personality," *El Periodico*, March 31, 2011 OSC: FEA20110408016589.

²⁶ "Highlights: Central America Media," *Presa Libre*, April 4, 2011, OSC: LAP20110404026001.

²⁷ "Guatemala: Lorenzana Case Arrest Delay, Land Dispute Matter Addressed," *Plaza Publica*, April 29, 2011, OSC: LAP 20110506369001.

²⁸ Pachico, Elyssa, "Top Guatemalan Drug Trafficker Arrested," *In Sight*, March 31, 2011.

<http://www.insightcrime.org/insight-latest-news/item/728-top-guatemala-drug-trafficker-arrested>

²⁹ "Guatemala: Lorenzana Case Arrest Delay, Land Dispute Matter Addressed," *Plaza Publica*, April 29, 2011, OSC: LAP 20110506369001.

³⁰ Pachico, Elyssa, "Top Guatemalan Drug Trafficker Arrested," *In Sight*, March 31, 2011.

<http://www.insightcrime.org/insight-latest-news/item/728-top-guatemala-drug-trafficker-arrested>

³¹ "Guatemala: Drug Trafficker Said to Have Split Personality," *El Periodico*, March 31, 2011, OSC: FEA20110408016589.