

## **Suriname**

### **A. Introduction**

Suriname is a transit zone for South American cocaine en route to Europe, Africa and, to a lesser extent, the United States. Suriname's sparsely populated coastal region and isolated jungle interior, together with weak border controls and infrastructure, make narcotics detection and interdiction efforts difficult. Traffickers are able to move drug shipments into and through Suriname by land, water, and air with little resistance. There is little evidence of drug production in Suriname, although national police officials (widely known as "Korps Politie Suriname" in Dutch, or KPS) have advised U.S law enforcement officials of increased cultivation of cannabis.

### **B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends**

#### **1. Institutional Development**

As a matter of official policy, the Government of Suriname is committed to combating illegal narcotics trafficking. However, Suriname's practical ability to apprehend and prosecute narcotics traffickers remains inhibited by drug-related corruption, bureaucratic hurdles, and inadequate legislation.

Under the coordination of the Office of the President, the National Anti-Drug Council and the Ministries of Health, Justice/Police, and Education formulated the draft National Drug Master Plan for 2011-2015. The National Assembly approved the Plan, which addresses both supply and demand, in October 2011.

Suriname passed four laws intended to satisfy the recommendations of the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force, in order to implement common countermeasures to address the problem of criminal money laundering: a law regulating oversight of money transfer offices; an amendment on reporting unusual transactions; a law regulating bank and credit system supervision; and additional legislation on money laundering and terrorism financing.

Suriname is a party to the Inter-American Convention against Corruption and Migrant Smuggling and the Inter-American Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters. Since 1976, Suriname has been sharing narcotics information with the Netherlands pursuant to a mutual legal assistance agreement. In 1999, the United States and Suriname completed a comprehensive bilateral maritime counternarcotics enforcement agreement that remains in force. Suriname has also signed bilateral agreements to combat drug trafficking with Brazil, Venezuela and Colombia.

Suriname has two memoranda of understanding (MOU) with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) that provide for a DEA presence in Suriname and the establishment of the Narcotics Intelligence Unit, a vetted unit of five to eight officers. In 2012, Suriname signed an MOU with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to participate in their Container Control Program. Current law prohibits the extradition of Surinamese nationals and this is upheld in practice.

In 2012, Suriname began the installation of an automated biometrics border control management system that will identify and record people traveling to and from Suriname at the principal airport and border crossings. Suriname also participated in the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative-funded digitized fingerprint system to link its criminal databases among the major law enforcement entities in the country as well as internationally.

## **2. Supply Reduction**

In 2012, the Government of Suriname seized 395 kilograms (kg) of cocaine, 102 kg of cannabis, 8000 ecstasy pills and 80 grams of hashish. Two hundred and sixty-nine people were arrested for drug-related offenses, of which two hundred and sixteen cases were sent to the Office of the Attorney General for prosecution. One hundred and forty-one people were prosecuted for drug-related offenses.

Suriname is working on legislation to control precursor chemicals, but currently is unable to detect the diversion of precursor chemicals for drug production. The Government of Suriname focuses significant narcotics interdiction resources on the country's western border with Guyana, a key route for cocaine trafficking by land and water.

Suriname's international airport, Johan Adolf Pengel International, continues to work with the Government of Suriname and a Canadian partner to implement an air-traffic radar and control system first installed in 2010, but which is still not operational. Interdiction efforts at the airport are run by the Combating International Drug Trafficking (CIDT) team composed of approximately 32 KPS members. The team focuses almost exclusively on searching passengers and cargo on flights bound for the Netherlands, where the majority of narcotics are trafficked from Suriname. The use of foodstuffs to move narcotics through the airport continued in 2012. In October, 57 kg of cocaine were recovered from hollowed-out sweet potatoes.

The CIDT team utilizes urine test kits at the airport to identify suspected drug mules, and "sniffer dogs" for additional narcotics detection. Drug mules who evade detection in Suriname may be arrested upon arrival in Amsterdam, where 100-percent inspection of all bags and passengers from Suriname is routine.

The bulk of cocaine smuggled from Suriname to Europe and Africa occurs via container cargo. Smaller fishing vessels also carry drugs out to sea and transfer them to large freight vessels in international waters. The Government of Suriname is working to create a coast guard, though its current maritime capability is limited. Suriname does not operate a maritime radar system to track movements at sea.

There is local cultivation of cannabis in Suriname but little data exists on the amount under cultivation. There was one seizure of 20 kg at the Zorg en Hoop Airport from luggage intended for Guyana. However, there is no additional evidence that cannabis is exported in significant quantities.

## **3. Drug Abuse Awareness, Demand Reduction, and Treatment**

The Organization of American States' Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission will begin a survey on Suriname's drug consumption in 2013. A new National Anti-Drug Council was installed in 2012 and worked to raise drug awareness, held prevention meetings with children, parents, and teachers and focused efforts on educating dropouts. There is one government-run detoxification center that is free of charge; other treatment centers are run by non-governmental organizations.

#### **4. Corruption**

During 2012, the Government of Suriname officially maintained its commitment to combat narcotics trafficking and took measures to apprehend government officials for drug-related corruption. However, corruption remained pervasive throughout all levels of government and there was evidence of drug-related corruption among government officials.

Two high-level officials within the Suriname government have previous convictions for drug trafficking: President Desire Bouterse and Member of Parliament Ronnie Brunswijk have been convicted in absentia in separate court cases in the Netherlands. France also has an outstanding arrest warrant for Brunswijk on similar charges. Neither has served the sentence associated with the conviction, as Suriname does not extradite its citizens.

#### **C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives**

In 2012, the United States provided training, technical assistance and material support to several elements of the KPS, as well as to the Suriname Navy and other maritime authorities. The operational effectiveness of Suriname's law enforcement institutions continued to be hampered by government reorganization efforts within the law enforcement structures and unfilled vacancies within law enforcement units.

#### **D. Conclusion**

The United States encourages the Government of Suriname to increase efforts to pursue major narcotics traffickers, dismantle their organizations, and strengthen regional and international cooperation. Additionally, the United States encourages Suriname to work to eliminate bureaucratic obstacles that limit law enforcement's effectiveness and to continue to develop the capacity of its counternarcotics-focused units. Suriname's participation in UNODC's Container Control Program is a positive sign that the Government of Suriname intends to improve enforcement at seaports, the primary conduits for shipments of narcotics exiting Suriname. Increased monitoring and protection of porous borders and the interior with a radar detection system and adequate air support to conduct arrests in Suriname's interior should also be a priority.