

Tackling Organized Crime and Gang Crime in Canada

Serious organized crime is a problem in many areas of Canada. This document briefly considers three key areas of organized crime and looks at how the abmpegasus covert management suite can assist in tackling the issues.

Introduction to the problem

i. Illicit Drugs

Narcotics are a continuing and growing threat in Canada¹. The Criminal Intelligence Service (CISC) reported that “Illicit drugs continue to be the primary criminal market in Canada in terms of estimated revenue and the number of participating organized crime groups. These drugs are distributed across the country by criminal groups operating at all levels of capability and scope².”

Reports such as *The Globalization of Crime* by the United Nations (2010)³ and the 2007 World Drug Report⁴ illustrate the global scale of the problem.

ii. People Trafficking

People trafficking ranks as the third largest grossing sector of organized crime after drugs and arms⁵ with 600 to 800 people trafficked into Canada each year⁶. Trafficking victims originate from all over the world, particularly Eastern Europe, Asia⁷ and there are strong links to organized crime groups. The US Department of State’s *Trafficking in Persons Report 2010* suggests that Canada should “intensify efforts to investigate and prosecute trafficking offenses, and convict and sentence trafficking offenders; increase

¹ The Government of the United States and The Government of Canada (2007) *Drug Threat Assessment 2007*

² Criminal Intelligence Service Canada (2009) *Report on Organized Crime*

³ UNODC (2010) *The Globalisation of Crime: A Transnational Organised Crime Threat Assessment*

⁴ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2007) *2007 World Drug Report*

⁵ The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, quoted by World Vision Canada.

⁶ The Government of Canada and The Government of the United States (2006) *United States-Canada Bi-National Assessment of Trafficking in Persons*.

⁷ US Department of State (2010) *Trafficking In Persons Report*

use of proactive law enforcement techniques to investigate trafficking cases, including allegations of labor trafficking... and improve data collection”.

iii. Gangs

CISC states that, “with globalization and increasingly multi-cultural communities, organized crime is now best understood as small, loosely structured and often multi-ethnic networks that adapt quickly to any pressures or changes in the criminal or legitimate marketplaces”⁸. Criminal gangs are closely associated with the aforementioned illicit drugs and people trafficking. There were approximately 750 criminal groups identified in Canada in 2009, the main gangs falling into the following categories:

- Outlaw motorcycle gangs
- Street Gangs
- Asian-based organized crime groups
- Eastern European organized crime groups
- First Nations organized crime groups

Each group presents specific law enforcement challenges, but the growing dominance and spread of gang crime is a cause for concern that must be addressed.

How abmpegasus helps

abmpegasus is a software system designed to mitigate many of the risks surrounding covert policing and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of covert policing. Covert policing is a crucial tool in the fight against organized crime, and abmpegasus serves to improve the effectiveness and reliability of covert operations.

Intelligence management

abmpegasus can help reduce the fragmentation of intelligence between law enforcement agencies as well as allowing non-sworn agencies to input valuable intelligence. By allowing intelligence to be shared between agencies, personnel are better informed, spend less time gathering intelligence that already exists elsewhere, and can discover links between information, crime, people and groups that was previously hidden.

⁸ Criminal Intelligence Service Canada (2009) *Report on Organised Crime*

Crucially, abmpegasus allows intelligence to be properly sanitized before it is shared with the rest of the network, allowing particularly sensitive information (E.g. identity of confidential informants/agents) to be protected. This minimizes the chance of revealing sensitive information whilst maintaining the benefit of sharing all intelligence across jurisdictional borders.

What benefits does improved intelligence sharing bring?

- Improved detection and prevention of crime
- Enhanced ability to detect emerging crimes and criminal organisations
- More proactive tasking and recruitment of sources
- Improved ability to protect the right to life of informants and agents (as per the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms⁹)
- More standardized management of sources
- More effective dissemination of operational and strategic intelligence

Information in Confidence

abmpegasus Information In Confidence (IIC) allows law enforcement agencies to reliably store all information and intelligence received in confidence from members of the public. This is particularly valuable for Crimestoppers organizations but is also important for any law enforcement agency that needs to maintain the security of confidential information. Unique reference numbers make it easier to manage pieces of information within the system and improve the integrity of anonymous tip-offs and leads.

Covert operations

i. Intercepting private communications

Interception of private communications is a valuable tool for law enforcement, however it is important that intercept intelligence is properly managed in order to maintain evidential integrity and legal compliance.

⁹ Department of Justice (1982) *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*

abmpegasus helps the law enforcement agency to manage authorization of intercept activity. Most importantly, abmpegasus provides a searchable repository to store intelligence gathered from interception. Relevant intelligence can be added to the current investigation and intelligence about other crimes can then be linked to other investigations or people. This helps to identify and prevent case overlap.

ii. Using Confidential Informants and Agents

When recruiting informants and agents it is important to undergo proper pre-authorization checks to ensure the reliability of any information provided. abmpegasus facilitates this, allowing detailed records to be securely stored for each informer/agent. This also allows improved risk assessment and mitigation in relation to the informant/agent.

abmpegasus can then record authorization of agents and the lawful justification of otherwise unlawful acts. Further details about the agent/informer can be recorded, including the identity of the designated handler, allowing the agency to build up a comprehensive, secure, searchable database of Human Sources.

By compiling and storing enhanced profiles, police departments can be more proactive in their recruitment and tasking of agents. This allows police departments to find out what they want to know, rather than what the informant/agent wants to tell them. Resources can, therefore, be used more effectively and efficiently utilized in order to deliver better results.

There have been a number of recent cases in North America surrounding inappropriate use of informants. Improved recording and management oversight reduces the potential for misuse or abuse whilst also reducing the potential for cases to be abandoned on grounds of unreliable informant information. Similarly, all financial transactions with informants can be recorded from authorization to receipt, helping to ensure that informants are paid in line with the agency's policy and promises made to the informant, as well as reducing the opportunity for accountancy errors or misappropriation of funds.

In addition, abmpegasus records the results stemming from information obtained from informants or agents. This allows accurate cost-benefit analysis of human sources, leading to more efficient covert operations.

iii. Protecting witnesses

Modern technology is making it harder to maintain protected witnesses' new identities. Protected witnesses engaging in internet activity (including social networking sites) can inadvertently reveal details of their previous identity or new location. Trails may be followed from mobile phones whilst facial recognition technology is also causing increasing complications. In addition, gang witnesses often find it very difficult to adjust to a new lifestyle, particularly when their gang life has involved continual violence and illegal activity. This brings up various issues surrounding re-skilling and psychological adjustment.

abmpegasus allows all details of witnesses to be recorded and stored including full details of assumed identities. This makes it easier to manage protected witnesses and reduces the chance of their cover being inadvertently compromised.

By storing full details about a protected person, officers are able to make more informed decisions about special measures that may need to be taken to protect him/her. Crucially, this also allows a decision trail to be recorded to verify whether proper procedure has been followed.

When dealing with victims of people trafficking, witness protection is particularly crucial. abmpegasus facilitates adherence to essential policy and process, helping to identify potential problems before they occur.

Maintaining Reputation

Professional and accountable policing

The public must be assured that law enforcement agencies are acting in a professional and accountable manner. In the hidden area of covert policing, internal processes to manage accountability are more important than ever. abmpegasus allows management to improve their oversight of covert operations, helping to get a more holistic understanding of ongoing operations as well as identify anomalies or causes for concern.

Minimising corruption

abmpegasus guides police officers through authorization processes and provides a location to store all operational details. All communication and transactions with confidential informants, agents and protected witnesses can be recorded, along with details of what meetings involved and any promises or financial transactions that are

made. This improves the accountability of police officers and management oversight, making it easier to identify corrupt officers.

Preventing miscarriages of justice

Maintaining the reputation of law enforcement is crucial to public confidence. A number of reports and inquiries have recommended action to improve covert operations management:

i. Ferguson Report¹⁰

Part III of the 2004 Ferguson Report extols the virtues of the United Kingdom's source management processes, specifically with regard to the principles of supervision and control. Originally developed in collaboration with UK policing, abmpegasus is specifically designed to support improved supervision and control in all areas of covert policing. Full auditing capability is critical to supervision and abmpegasus ensures that this can be achieved by tracking the activity of all officers. The system also helps to manage the complicated area of disclosure where required by the courts.

ii. Morin Inquiry¹¹:

Chapter III of the 1998 Kaufman inquiry into the wrongful conviction of Guy Paul Morin finds that the case relied heavily on the testimony of two jailhouse informants who had a history of dishonesty, mental health issues and a strong desire to be released early. abmpegasus supports the recommendations of the report surrounding the need to objectively assess informants' reliability, specifically with regard to their motivation and previous history.

¹⁰ Ferguson, G. (2004) *Review and Recommendations Concerning Various Aspects of Police Misconduct*

¹¹ Kaufman, F. (1998) *Report of the Kaufman Commission on Proceedings Involving Guy Paul Morin.*

ii. Sophonow Inquiry¹²:

Similar issues were found in the case of Thomas Sophonow, who was convicted of the murder of Barbara Stoppel three times before his acquittal in 1985, having spent 45 months in jail. The informant in this case was a frequent informant with a history of perjury, yet was used to support the case against Sophonow. abmpegasus helps to ensure that appropriate processes are followed regarding the interviewing and treatment of jailhouse informants as well as disclosure of material regarding the informant's credibility.

Ensuring the welfare of all

In addition, it is important to protect officers and the police service from civil litigation or criminal prosecution by enforcing proper risk management procedures and oversight of activity, ensuring occupational health and safety in compliance with the Criminal Code and Bill C-45. abmpegasus provides a repository to record all actions that are taken with regard to assessing and managing risk in covert policing.

Conclusion

Organised crime is clearly a present and growing problem in parts of Canada. However, by working intelligently and cooperatively, law enforcement can be better positioned to tackle the situation. Software systems, such as abmpegasus, can support new intelligence sharing and policy initiatives, helping law enforcement agencies to maintain a crucial advantage.

Many areas of covert policing can carry a high risk and the potential for wrong-doing, both unintentional and malicious, which cannot be ignored. In order to continue utilizing the important benefits of covert operations, it is essential that tools like abmpegasus are fully embraced to ensure the integrity of the justice system.

¹² Cory, P. (2001) *The Inquiry Regarding Thomas Sophonow*. Province of Manitoba, Commission of Inquiry

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