



>> **CONFRONTING**  
**THE THREAT** >>

Strategy 2001-2

NORTHERN IRELAND ORGANISED CRIME TASK FORCE >>

# ORGANISED CRIME TASK FORCE

Chairman: Rt Hon Adam Ingram MP, Minister of State

Criminal Justice Directorate (Northern Ireland Office)  
HM Customs & Excise  
National Criminal Intelligence Service  
Organised & International Crime Directorate (Home Office)  
Police Service of Northern Ireland (from 1 Sept 2001)  
Royal Ulster Constabulary  
Policing & Security Directorate (Northern Ireland Office)  
other Government agencies

## STRATEGY SUB GROUP

(liaison with the  
Republic of Ireland)

## CO-ORDINATION SUB GROUP

## LEGAL SUB GROUP

## ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS

## PUBLIC SECTOR SUB GROUP

(liaison with the  
Office of First Minister  
& Deputy First Minister)

# CONFRONTING THE THREAT >>

Strategy 2001-2

>> **Northern Ireland Organised Crime Task Force**

Northern Ireland Office  
Block B  
Castle Buildings  
Belfast BT4 3SG

[www.nio.gov.uk](http://www.nio.gov.uk)

# CONFRONTING THE THREAT >>

## Strategy 2001-2



Rt. Hon. Adam Ingram, MP

**“Shining a light into the dark side of Northern Ireland exposes some of the criminal legacy of the troubles. Ultimately, the cure for this sickness lies within the grasp of the people of Northern Ireland.”**

>>

### Foreword

#### **The creation of the Organised Crime Task Force in September last year** was

a mark of the Government's determination to help Northern Ireland make the transition to a normal society. It was our belief that tackling the organised criminality which had flourished during the troubles was essential to achieving a stable and truly peaceful society.

For the first time we are making available to a wider public a Northern Ireland threat assessment, detailing the range, depth, and estimated impact of organised and serious crime on society. The document shines a light into the dark side of Northern Ireland and exposes some of the criminal legacy of the troubles. Alongside the description of the problem, we are also publishing our first annual strategy for confronting that threat.

Neither document pretends to be exhaustive. There are refinements to be made in future years and gaps to be filled. We recently launched a major consultation process with the private sector which will give us a much clearer insight into criminal abuse of the business community in Northern Ireland.

I want to pay tribute to the impressive successes which the RUC, Customs & Excise and many other organisations have had in tackling organised crime. I am grateful for the enthusiasm and commitment they have shown as members of the Task Force. I also want to thank the RUC Analysis Centre for their excellent work in compiling this first published threat assessment.

The publication of these documents marks an important step in the process of tackling the mafia-like virus which infects Northern Ireland society. This will be a long struggle. Ultimately, the cure for this sickness lies within the grasp of the people of Northern Ireland. It is only through partnership between the public, the members of this Task Force, and many other interested agencies, that we will begin to rid communities of the criminality which denies them the safety and prosperity they deserve.

**Rt Hon Adam Ingram MP**

*Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office  
Chairman, Organised Crime Task Force*



>> **THE NEED FOR A STRATEGIC APPROACH** >>

“ Organised crime has many forms. It drains public finance by preventing revenue reaching the Exchequer.”

**On 25 September 2000, the Secretary of State announced a multi-agency approach to tackling the organised crime problem in Northern Ireland.**

## Introduction: the need for a strategic approach

This approach builds on the existing work of the operational agencies in Northern Ireland: significant successes were made by those agencies during 2000 to tackle the problem.

Organised crime is a world wide phenomenon. It is entrepreneurial and follows high profit, low risk activities with major players shifting their activities accordingly. The problem is not static and a flexible, co-ordinated strategic approach is therefore needed to help ensure that actions on the ground are targeted to best effect.

Organised crime has many forms. It drains public finance by preventing revenue reaching the Exchequer; and a wide range of other criminal activities are engaged in for profit. Organised crime impacts adversely on legitimate business and it often relies on the threat or use of violence and extortion. In the Northern Ireland context, some organised crime activities have an adverse impact on society which is greater than the value of the criminal activity itself, particularly when paramilitary organisations are involved. If unchecked, organised crime has the potential to be a barrier to the development of a normal civic society in Northern Ireland.

### Overview of the Organised Crime Task Force

To provide a new strategic focus for the ongoing work of the operational agencies, an Organised Crime Task Force, chaired by the Security Minister, Adam Ingram was established after the then Secretary of State's announcement in September. The establishment of the Task Force has the support of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister. This document is the Task Force's strategy for its first full financial year and is published alongside the Task Force's threat assessment for the same period.

The Task Force exists as a medium to long term strategic response to the organised crime problem. Each year, the Task Force will revise its threat assessment and will set strategic priorities to respond to and stay ahead of the changing scale and scope of the threat. The strategic priorities will be given over each year to an operational Strategic Tasking Group to be cascaded and actioned within the agencies. The Task Force will continue to meet on a regular basis during the year to provide an ongoing focus for continuous analysis of the problem, to measure in-year the success of the current strategy and to set strategic priorities for the forthcoming financial year.



#### NATURE OF THE THREAT

**"If unchecked, organised crime has the potential to be a barrier to the development of a normal civic society in Northern Ireland."**





#### AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH

"The Task Force will help promote an inclusive approach to tackling crime. Government, the devolved administration, public bodies, operational agencies, business and individuals all have a role to play."



## Strategic Response

This annual process will be supplemented by an ongoing programme of work aimed at continuously improving the strategic response. To this end, a number of sub groups have been established to deliver individual projects. A crucial area of developmental activity will be the output of the co-ordination sub group which will improve upon existing co-ordination arrangements and will draw in other agencies and regulators as necessary. Co-ordination with the Irish Republic is also crucial and a forum has been set up in which that is being taken forward.

### The Task Force - its context and role

Organised Crime is just one manifestation of the crime problem in Northern Ireland. This type of crime tends to be high profile but volume crime is also of considerable concern to members of the public. This strategy document has a specific role - to set strategic priorities for tackling organised crime - but the Task Force sees this document as contributing to the fight against the totality of crime in Northern Ireland. To that end, the Task Force will, over the year, help promote an inclusive approach to tackling crime. Government, the devolved administration, public bodies, the operational agencies, business and individuals all have a role to play. The Task Force will also help promote the designing out of crime in business systems in the private and

public sectors, and it welcomes the publication of the Proceeds of Crime Bill which will provide a new basis for recovering the proceeds of crime. Overall, the Task Force will promote a policy of an inclusive and holistic approach to the crime problem in Northern Ireland.

The Task Force also recognises that its work must be complementary to UK-wide organised crime objectives. This strategy document concentrates on tackling organised crime in Northern Ireland, which has a unique element to it with paramilitary involvement, but is firmly within the aims and objectives of **Criminal Justice: The Way Ahead** - the national strategy for reducing crime published in February 2001. The Taskforce strategy is also complementary to the ongoing strategic approach to tackling drugs.

### The strategic priorities for 2001/2

Published alongside this strategy is the first publicly available analysis of the threat from serious and organised crime in Northern Ireland. The threat assessment provides a sound analysis of information currently available and identifies information gaps. The threat assessment will be revised annually, building up over time an increasingly sophisticated picture of the problem. In line with the continuous development of the threat assessment, the annual strategy will target on an increasingly sophisticated basis those

activities which have the greatest impact on society. Taking as the starting point the aims of the then Secretary of State's 25 September announcement, and the scale and scope of the problem identified in the first threat assessment, the Task Force has set a number of strategic priorities for 2001/2. The threat assessment has identified the existence of 78 organised crime groups involving some 400 individuals in Northern Ireland. Of these groups, 35 have no known paramilitary associations.

Most groups are involved in more than one type of crime and certain activities - such as money laundering - are common across the board to support numerous criminal activities. These key findings require some explanation.

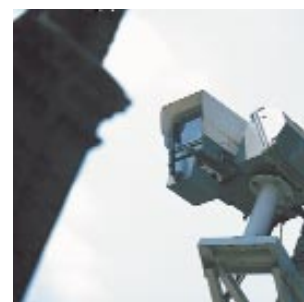
The methodology employed for the threat assessment is the UK standard (used in the 1999 National Criminal Intelligence Service report) where classification as an organised crime group must satisfy four criteria. These are that the group must contain at least three people, the criminal activity is prolonged or indefinite, the criminals in the group are motivated by profit or power, and that serious criminal offences are being committed. This definition of an organised criminal group clearly covers a wide range of activities and groups of disparate size.

However, the Task Force finds it useful in this first year to have a comprehensive overview of a wide range of criminal activity resulting from the use of this methodology.

The term paramilitary "associations" is also used to reflect a wide spectrum of influence. At one end of the scale, the criminal activity will be controlled by the paramilitaries and at the other there will be no known association. Along the scale between the two are differing levels of control.

For the first year, the Task Force has set strategic priorities on the basis of tackling those activities which have an impact on society greater than the value of the activity itself and which will involve closer co-operation by the agencies. It has also endorsed the threat assessment recommendation to target operationally a combination of key individuals and commodities.

The strategic priorities for 2001/2 are set out overleaf. The strategic priorities will be met through a combination of activities, including policy development, use of existing powers and regulations, prevention - both classic crime prevention and the designing out of opportunity - disruption, seizure and prosecution. All have their part to play.



#### UNDER SCRUTINY

**" the annual strategy will target on an increasingly sophisticated basis those activities which have the greatest impact on society."**





## Strategic Priorities for 2001/2



### ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM

"The Task Force has begun a rolling programme of activities to help refine the annual strategic response."



- reduce extortion, intimidation and blackmail;
- develop operational drugs priorities to inhibit the development of drugs abuse in Northern Ireland, and to disrupt the supply of all illegal drugs;
- reduce the loss to the Exchequer from the smuggling of hydrocarbon oil, fuel laundering, mixing rebated fuel and dilution of road fuel;
- reduce the loss to the Exchequer from smuggling of tobacco and alcohol;
- target money laundering activities and make fullest use of existing legislation on seizing proceeds of crime; and
- develop and agree a methodology for identifying and prioritising organised criminals in Northern Ireland for concerted action by the agencies.

### Programme of work

As discussed in above, the Task Force has begun a rolling programme of activities to help refine the annual strategic response. The programme complements the five elements of **Criminal Justice: The Way Ahead**, tailored in a way to address the organised crime problem in Northern Ireland. The programme work is divided into the following sub groups:

### Strategy sub group

Drive the strategic approach to tackling organised crime in Northern Ireland by:

- assisting the Task Force in developing the Northern Ireland Organised Crime Strategy and working up proposals on success measures;
- providing a focus for North/South issues; and
- ensuring that the Task Force works within UK organised crime objectives.

### Legal sub group

Ensure best powers are available and are used to best effect by:

- receiving new ideas for legislation; and
- developing legislative proposals for consideration by the Task Force.

### Co-ordination sub group

Ensure best co-ordination arrangements are in place by:

- mapping out existing co-ordination structures, and establishing which other agencies need to be brought into the co-ordination structures and which, if any, need to be brought into the sub-groups and/or the Task Force;
- mapping out and propose to the Task Force the most efficient and effective co-ordination structures for enhancing operational success and the strategy for achieving those structures; and
- identifying co-ordination difficulties and ensuring where possible they are addressed and resolved.

### Assessment and Analysis sub group

Ensure full annual threat assessment by:

- driving the diagnosis programme, establishing what further information is needed and its sources, and commissioning new work as necessary;
- advising the Task Force on the scale and scope of the problem through an iterative process; and
- propose optimum intelligence flows.

### Public Sector sub group

Promote inclusive response by:

- providing a link between the Task Force, and its sub groups, and the devolved administration by regular discussions with OFM/DFM.



A THOROUGH RESPONSE

**“The programme complements the five elements of Criminal Justice 2010, tailored in a way to address the organised crime problem in Northern Ireland.”**

>>



#### WORKING TOGETHER

**“A true partnership between Government, law enforcement agencies and the general public will confront the threat posed to Northern Ireland society by organised and serious crime.”**



## Measuring Success

The first threat assessment is the benchmark for setting out the scale and scope of the problem. As more information is forthcoming, the assessments will become increasingly sophisticated over time.

For this first year, broad measures as discussed are set out above. In line with a more sophisticated threat assessment, the Task Force would intend to set more tightly defined measures in subsequent years.

As well as meeting the above priorities, the Task Force wishes to see an increasing public profile for tackling organised crime. It is essential that operational success is promoted and that the public are aware of the scale of effort involved in tackling the problem.

Only through a true partnership between Government, law enforcement agencies and the general public will we confront the threat posed to Northern Ireland society by organised and serious crime.

## ORGANISED CRIME TASK FORCE ANNUAL STRATEGY SETTING PROCESS



# Secretary of State's Announcement

25 September 2000

"We in politics must do more to attack the racketeering, the smuggling and the drug dealing that is feeding those egos and financing the rump of paramilitarism that stands between Northern Ireland and the decent society we are striving to create here... Our focus rightly has been on defeating terrorism, we must now reach further and grip the organised crime that terrorism has formed because let us be absolutely clear, that too does not belong in a normal, decent, civilised society. That too must come to an end.

Tackling that blight on our society is a many sided problem which demands different answers from different angles, united by a single purpose and that is why today I am asking the security minister in Northern Ireland Adam Ingram to bring together on a continuing basis for as long as it takes, all the agencies involved in a concerted drive to cut off those organised criminal activities at their source. To work together and where appropriate with our Irish counterparts to rid Northern Ireland of this Mafia like virus that still infests society here.

Adam's task will not be easy, but it is absolutely crucial if we are to maintain the confidence of those who supported the Agreement because they believed that it would bring an end to paramilitarism in all its forms. And I am not stopping there. I can announce too that we will be taking new confiscation powers to recover the proceeds of their crime, working with our colleagues throughout Britain there will be a new agency whose job will be to seize the non-cash assets and prevent the use of land and property to launder money from their crime.

No longer will the paramilitaries be able to salt away the profits from all their ill-gotten gains: those days must end."