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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE LAUNCHES NEW LAW ENFORCEMENT STRATEGY TO COMBAT INCREASING THREAT OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

WASHINGTON – Today Attorney General Michael B. Mukasey announced a new strategy in the fight against international organized crime that will address this growing threat to U.S. security and stability. *The Law Enforcement Strategy to Combat International Organized Crime* (the strategy) was developed following an October 2007 International Organized Crime Threat Assessment (IOC Threat Assessment) and will address the demand for a strategic, targeted and concerted U.S. response to combat the identified threats. This strategy builds on the broad foundation the Administration has developed in recent years to enhance information sharing, and to secure U.S. borders and financial systems from a variety of transnational threats.

Today's announcement by the Attorney General was made during a forum hosted by the Center for Strategic and International Studies with Department of Justice Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division Alice S. Fisher, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Deputy Director John S. Pistole and Department of Homeland Security Assistant Secretary for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Julie Myers.

International organized crime is defined as those self-perpetuating associations of individuals who operate internationally for the purpose of obtaining power, influence, monetary and commercial gains, wholly or in part by illegal means, while protecting their activities through a pattern of corruption and violence. International organized criminals operate in hierarchies, clans, networks and cells. The crimes they commit vary as widely as the organizational structures they employ.

The strategy establishes an investigation and prosecution framework as committed and connected as the international organized crime structure it must combat. U.S. federal law enforcement agencies, in an unprecedented cooperative effort on this issue, will share international organized crime information and intelligence, collectively identify and prioritize the most significant threats and then put the full force of U.S. law enforcement's expertise and resources toward mitigating those threats. In addition, U.S.

law enforcement will increase cooperation with international partners to bring international criminals to justice, in the United States and abroad.

The strategy specifically reacts to the globalization of legal and illegal business, advances in technology, particularly the Internet, and the evolution of symbiotic relationships between criminals, public officials and business leaders that have combined to create a new, less restrictive environment within which international organized criminals can operate. Without the necessity of a physical presence, U.S. law enforcement must combat international organized criminals that target the relative wealth of the people and institutions in the United States while remaining outside the country.

“As international organized criminals have adapted their tactics over time and embraced emerging technology, we too must adapt,” said Attorney General Michael B. Mukasey. “With this strategy, we’re building a new, 21st century program that we believe will be nimble enough to fight the threat of international organized crime for years to come.”

“International organized criminals have broadened the scope and depth of their illegal activities, reaching into a variety of sectors to sustain their inherent quest for money and power. These modern-day criminals threaten our physical, economic and national security, indeed, in many circumstances without even setting foot inside U.S. borders,” said Assistant Attorney Alice S. Fisher. “With this strategy, international organized criminals will be targeted and prosecuted in the same determined and concerted manner in which they pursue their illegal activities.”

Laid out in the strategy is a comprehensive and detailed plan that will enable the Department and nine federal law enforcement agencies to gather their collective resources to most effectively combat the threat of international organized crime. Ultimately, the strategy aims to create consensus among domestic law enforcement in identifying the most significant priority targets and then unified and concerted action among domestic and international law enforcement in significantly disrupting and dismantling those targets. This unprecedented coordination will include utilizing all available U.S. Government programs and capabilities, including existing economic, consular and other non-law enforcement means.

In addition, as a response to international organized criminals’ ability to operate unconstrained by national borders and geographic law enforcement jurisdictions, the strategy aims to ensure criminal laws and operating procedures reflect the modern realities and needs of international crime fighting. Similarly vital is the need to work in collaboration with public and private institutions that also face victimization by international organized criminals and therefore have been forced to act to minimize the impact on their businesses.

Prior to the strategy’s development, the Department of Justice and law enforcement partners conducted a comprehensive assessment of international organized crime. The IOC Threat Assessment lays out the threat international organized crime

poses to U.S. national security, the stability of the U.S. economy and the integrity of government institutions, infrastructure and systems in the United States. The assessment is based on the best available information known to the U.S. Government through the combined efforts of the law enforcement, intelligence and interagency communities.

Specifically, the IOC Threat Assessment identifies and defines eight strategic threats:

- International organized criminals have penetrated the energy market and other strategic sectors of the U.S. and world economy. As U.S. energy needs continue to grow, so too could the power of those who control energy resources.
- International organized criminals provide logistical and other support to terrorists, foreign intelligence services and foreign governments, all with interests acutely adverse to those of U.S. national security.
- International organized criminals traffic in people and contraband goods, bringing people and products through U.S. borders to the detriment of border security, the U.S. economy, and the health and lives of those human beings exploited by human trafficking.
- International organized criminals exploit the U.S. and international financial system to move illegal profits and funds, including sending billions in illicit funds through the U.S. financial system annually. To continue this practice, they seek to corrupt financial service providers globally.
- International organized criminals use cyberspace to target U.S. victims and infrastructure, jeopardizing the security of personal information, the stability of business and government infrastructures and the security and solvency of financial investment markets.
- International organized criminals are manipulating securities exchanges and engaging in sophisticated fraud schemes that rob U.S. investors, consumers and government agencies of billions of dollars.
- International organized criminals have successfully corrupted public officials around the world, including countries of vital strategic importance to the United States and continue to seek ways to influence – legally or illegally – U.S. officials.
- International organized criminals use violence and the threat of violence as a basis of power.

“The activities of transnational and national organized criminal enterprises are increasing in scope and magnitude as these groups continue to strengthen their networking with each other to expand their operations,” said FBI Deputy Director John S.

Pistole. “By increasing international cooperation and information sharing, together we can disrupt and dismantle these global, sophisticated organizations that have exploited geopolitical, economic, social, and technological changes over the last two decades to become increasingly active worldwide.”

“Partnerships among law enforcement agencies are our most effective weapon in combating international criminal networks,” said Julie L. Myers, Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security for Immigration and Customs Enforcement. “These criminal organizations pursue profit, without regard for national boundaries, international laws or human life.”

On April 7, 2008, the Organized Crime Council, chaired by Deputy Attorney General Mark R. Filip, recommended and the Attorney General signed *The Law Enforcement Strategy to Combat International Organized Crime*. The Attorney General has been in charge of coordinating all federal law enforcement activity against organized crime since a 1968 executive order by President Lyndon Johnson established that authority.

Similarly, the Organized Crime Council has existed in various forms since 1970 and has always been charged with establishing priorities and formulating a national unified strategy to combat organized crime. This is the first time the Organized Crime Council has ever convened to focus on the threat from international organized crime and to develop a responsive strategy to that threat. The Organized Crime Council consists of the Deputy Attorney General, the Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division, the Chair of the Attorney General’s Advisory Committee and the leaders of nine participating federal law enforcement agencies, which include: Federal Bureau of Investigation; U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; U.S. Secret Service; Internal Revenue Service; U.S. Postal Inspection Service; Diplomatic Security; and U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of the Inspector General.

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