

OPENROADS III

FOR SAFER BORDERS



The Gambia | Guinea Bissau | Senegal

What is it about?

On 10, 11 and 12 November, a joint-sub-regional operation against Illicit Trafficking and Organized Crime between The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, and Senegal “Operation Open Roads III” was held. This operation was organized by UNODC in partnership with INTERPOL and through the commitment of the “Office Central de Répression du Trafic Illicite des Stupéfiants” (OCTIS) of Senegal, the Drug Law Enforcement Agency (DLEAG) of the Gambia and the Judicial Police of Guinea Bissau. In response to The Gambia, Guinea Bissau and Senegal’s need for support, the objective of this joint operation was to foster stronger cooperation, coordination and exchange of information between law enforcement authorities and judicial authorities in the fight against illicit cross-border trafficking.

How was it implemented?



REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS MEETING

Dakar, Senegal | 22nd-23rd August 2022

Strategies have been defined and adopted to strengthen international cooperation through inter-agency coordination to (1) effectively disrupt trafficking networks, (2) specify the risk indicators, and (3) to plan the activities related to the operation.

SPECIALIZED TRAININGS

The Gambia, Guinea Bissau and Senegal respectively | 19th-23rd, 26th-30th September 2022

Capacities of law enforcement field officers have been fostered in various topics depending on the requests of the countries, such as intelligence collection and analysis, surveillance, risk assessment, search methods or forensic services.

REGIONAL PRE-OPERATIONAL MEETING

Banjul, The Gambia | 4th-5th October 2022

The border posts covered by the operation have been selected and the logistic and equipment needs have been identified. The role and functioning of the Operational Coordination Unit was also discussed.

SURVEILLANCE OPERATION CONTROL DELIVERY EXERCISE

The Gambia, Guinea Bissau and Senegal | 10th, 11th and 12th November 2022

Twenty sensitive land border posts were selected to reflect the daily complexity of the law enforcement interactions speaking three different languages. In the field, 316 officers were deployed: 70 in The Gambia, 47 in Guinea Bissau, and 199 in Senegal. To ensure a smooth implementation and communication in real time between all the units, an Operational Coordination Unit (OCU) was established in Banjul, The Gambia. In this OCU were 23 representatives from relevant law enforcement agencies from the three countries, UNODC staff and consultants, and international experts from INTERPOL and CIVIPOL.

Material results of the operation

Seizures of 17,673 kilos of cannabis indica, 102,4 kilos of falsified medical products, 2 pistols with ammunition, and 18 stolen vehicles. The number of persons arrested was 11 among the 4065 checked.



Giboroh border post in The Gambia, Open Roads III



POST OPERATIONAL PHASE

DEBRIEFING MEETING AT INTERPOL HEADQUARTERS

Lyon, France | 8th-9th December 2022

The experience and outcomes of the Cross-Border Surveillance Operation and the Controlled delivery exercise have been presented and discussed and the collaboration between the three countries, INTERPOL and UNODC has been strengthened.

VISIT TO THE ITALIAN CENTRAL DIRECTORATE FOR ANTI-DRUGS SERVICES

Rome, Italy | 12th-13th December 2022

The objective was to present the work of all the participating Law Enforcement Agencies and UNODC in countering illicit traffic and discuss transregional perspectives, strategies and opportunities for collaboration and cooperation in the future.

WORKSHOP ON BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNT

Dakar, Senegal | 15th-16th December 2022

Best practices and lessons learnt have been shared, both at strategic and operational level, from which many recommendations have been expressed. The cooperation between Law Enforcement Agencies and the judicial authorities has also been reinforced.

WEAKNESSES

Clear lines of communication

The lack of clear lines of communication at different levels: either across countries (i.e., how to request information to the Head of LEAs in another country) or at a national level (i.e., communication between LEAs and NCBs, communication with other LEAs) prevented sound information sharing during the implementation of the Operation.

Strategic approach in intelligence sharing

Lack of reflexes on the use of available secured databases and necessity to automatize intelligence sharing to feed databases.

Linguistic and legislative diversity

Cross-border operation between three countries reuniting both common law (The Gambia) and civil law (Guinea Bissau, Senegal) models and speaking different languages (French, English and Portuguese).

Length and porosity of borders

Multiple informal crossing points and limited engagement of local communities.

STRENGTHS

Integration of surveillance equipment

During the control delivery exercise, the incorporation of vehicle tracking technology was a strong asset which helped providing the OCU with real time intelligence on the location of the vehicle.

Communication via instant messaging groups

Instant messaging groups at different levels (national heads of LEAs, national operation teams, OCU) facilitated informal information sharing.

Participatory and inclusive planning

Member States welcomed a participatory and inclusive approach for the activities where each national partner was able to provide inputs through regular regional meetings and coordination calls.

Consideration of the legal framework

UNODC's support in the development and endorsement of the Memorandum of Understanding for Cross-Border cooperation (2018) helped facilitate cooperation and buy-in from governments.

Targeted trainings

Focalized training sessions on surveillance and investigations techniques to be used during the cross-border Operation allowed local LEAs to develop specific capacities for border management.



Karang border post in Senegal,
Open Roads III

Key recommendations

from the general report of
Operation Open Roads III

- Encourage the establishment of transnational joint investigation teams.
- Strengthen inter-agency coordination (police, gendarmerie, customs and water & forestry) at the national level for prompt, regular and rational sharing of information and criminal intelligence.
- Improve exchanges between prosecutors and law enforcement officers under their jurisdiction and inform the relevant prosecutors in advance of the operation.
- Replicate Operation Open Roads in the coming months and years and expand the operation to other border countries.
- Replicate the controlled delivery exercise and adapt it to new forms of transnational organized crime.

Communication

Simultaneous interpretation in French, English and Portuguese facilitated exchanges during most of these activities.



Instant messaging groups created to facilitate interagency communication



 [Open Roads III cross border operation video](#)

 [Open Roads Webstory:](#)

 [Coverage by Senegalese National Television](#)

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