



"A Message from the Inspector General: Audit of the Drug Enforcement Administration's Headquarters-Based Oversight of its Supported Foreign Law Enforcement Units," August 2021

Hello, I'm Michael Horowitz, Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Justice.

Today, my office released a report on the Drug Enforcement Administration, or DEA's, oversight of supported foreign law enforcement units. The DEA relies on these units to target and disrupt transnational drug trafficking organizations, conduct bilateral operations, and coordinate judicial wire intercept programs.

We found that DEA headquarters' management and oversight of its supported foreign law enforcement units are insufficient for the high-risk environment in which these units operate. Specifically, there are significant risks in funding foreign law enforcement units and sharing sensitive investigative information in locales with histories of pervasive corruption.

Indeed, historically, there have been a series of critical incidents with a connection to DEA supported foreign law enforcement units, including bribery, the use of deadly force, and solicitation of prostitutes. Despite these events, DEA has not sufficiently assessed or augmented its oversight of these units. We believe that DEA should ensure it's taking reasonable and necessary actions—both program-wide and locally—to identify areas of improvement. However, we found DEA's response to these incidents was not always timely and did not result in DEA comprehensively reviewing or augmenting its oversight to mitigate the risk of similar incidents occurring in the future.

We also found that there are some foreign law enforcement units that DEA works with and funds that operate with limited accountability and oversight and outside the scope of formal programs.

We make 10 recommendations to help DEA improve its management and oversight of this important program.

To read our report, please visit our website oig.justice.gov, or go to oversight.gov.

Thank you for joining me today.

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