

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



(U//LES) Hells Angels and Bandidos Motorcycle Clubs Likely Aligning To Expand Presence, Increasing the Threat to Public Safety

(U) PREPARED BY CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIVE
DIVISION

21 FEBRUARY 2020
FBI IB119 20200221

(U) This document is classified: UNCLASSIFIED/LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE.

(U) Intelligence Bulletin template approved for fiscal year 2020, as of 1 October 2019.

(U) LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE: The information marked (U//LES) in this document is the property of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and may be distributed within the federal government (and its contractors), U.S. intelligence, law enforcement, public safety or protection officials, and individuals with a need to know. Distribution beyond these entities without FBI authorization is prohibited. Precautions should be taken to ensure this information is stored and/or destroyed in a manner that precludes unauthorized access. Information bearing the LES caveat may not be used in legal proceedings without first receiving authorization from the originating agency. Recipients are prohibited from subsequently posting the information marked LES on a website on an unclassified network without first obtaining FBI approval.

(U//LES) The FBI assesses the Hells Angels Motorcycle Club (Hells Angels) and the Bandidos Motorcycle Club (Bandidos) likely^a are aligning to expand both gangs' presence, leading to an increase in violent confrontations with rival outlaw motorcycle gangs (OMGs) and posing a heightened threat to public safety nation-wide. The FBI makes this assessment with medium confidence,^b based on reporting from FBI human sources, law enforcement partners, and open sources with varying degrees of access and corroboration.

(U//LES) The FBI makes this assessment with the key assumption the alliance between the Hells Angels and Bandidos, both one percenter^c OMGs,^d puts them in direct competition with rival OMGs capable of violent retaliation. This assessment is also based on the assumption the Hells Angels and Bandidos national alliance will not be short-lived. The FBI assesses the alliance between the Hells Angels and Bandidos likely will increase their presence across the United States and increase violent confrontations with rival OMGs in the near future, which will result in a heightened threat to public safety nation-wide. If the FBI received reports to indicate the Hells Angels and Bandidos either ended their alliance or agreed to maintain peace with rival OMGs, the FBI would revise this assessment or change the associated confidence level. Alternatively, increased reporting on violence between the Hells Angels and the Bandidos with rival OMGs would increase the likelihood of the main assessment.

^a (U) See Appendix A: Expressions of Likelihood.

^b (U) See Appendix B Confidence in Assessments and Judgments Based on a Body of Information.

^c (U) *Analyst Note*: The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the International Outlaw Motorcycle Gang Investigators Association define "one-percenters" as any group of motorcyclists who have voluntarily made a commitment to band together to abide by their organization's rules enforced by violence and who engage in activities that bring them and their club into repeated and serious conflict with society and the law. The group must be an ongoing organization, an association of three or more persons with a common interest or activity characterized by the commission of or involvement in a pattern of criminal or delinquent conduct.

^d (U) See Appendix C: US Department of Justice definition of an OMG.

UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE

(U) Source Summary Statement

(U//LES) Reporting in this intelligence bulletin came primarily from nine human sources with both direct and indirect access to the information provided, law enforcement reporting from investigators with direct access as part of their official duties at the Lubbock County Sheriff's Office, and online news publications. Sources most critical to the overall assessment were FBI human sources with both direct and indirect access and law enforcement reporting with direct access through official duties. Most of the critical sources have reported intelligence corroborated by the USIC and law enforcement; others have at least a limited level of vetting. The open source information provided both corroboration and context. This collection occurred between 11 June 2018 and 1 October 2019, and was current as of 31 January 2019.

(U//LES) The Hells Angels and Bandidos Motorcycle Clubs Likely Aligning To Expand Presence, Increasing the Threat to Public Safety

(U//LES) The FBI assesses the Hells Angels and Bandidos Motorcycle Clubs likely are aligning to expand their presence, leading to an increase in violent confrontations with rival OMGs and the threat to public safety nation-wide. This assessment is based on reporting Hells Angels and Bandidos have entered into alliances in several cities in the United States in response to the encroachment of rival OMGs on several of the Bandidos' dominant geographical territories.^e Additionally, the Hells Angels capitalized on the national alliance with the Bandidos to expand into geographical territories where the Hells Angels did not have presence, access, or influence. As OMG confrontations frequently occur in public, they consequently pose a threat to the safety of innocent bystanders.

- (U//LES) As of January 2019, FBI human sources with both direct and indirect access and an investigator assigned to the Lubbock County, Texas, Sheriff's Office with direct access indicated the Hells Angels and Bandidos signed a truce and publically showed support for one another by attending events together. The Hells Angels also established new charters in territories where their alliance with the Bandidos could help them combat locally prominent rivals.^{1, 2, 3, 4}
- (U//LES) As early as February 2019, FBI human sources with both direct and indirect access and local law enforcement reporting were anticipating an increase in violent confrontations due to the Hells Angels alliance with the Bandidos. The Hells Angels and Bandidos chapters in Colorado aligned to combat a territory "takeover" by their mutual rival, the Mongols Motorcycle Club (Mongols). The Hells Angels and Bandidos nationally announced a "Bloody Summer" against the Mongols and both clubs had shoot on sight^f orders from their mother clubs.^g Additionally, in Indiana, the Mongols planned to increase membership with patching over^h support clubs to compete with the

^e (U//FOUO) See Appendix D: Historical Context of Bandidos' Diminishing Influence

^f (U//FOUO) *Analyst Note:* A "shoot on sight" order generally means members and support clubs of the issuing OMG need not have approval from national leadership before shooting and killing members of rival OMGs seen displaying their colors or wearing garments indicating rival OMG affiliation.

^g (U) *Analyst Note:* In OMGs, the "mother" club refers to its national headquarters.

^h (U) *Analyst Note:* "Patching over" is the process in which a prospective member becomes a full "patched" member of an OMG.

Hells Angels. These Mongols members also began actively provoking violence with the Hells Angels by riding past their clubhouse and following them.^{5, 6, 7}

- (U//LES) As of March 2019, according to an FBI human source with direct access to a Bandidos member, the Bandidos and the Hells Angels were allied in Bandidos-controlled territory in Louisiana. Lacking a presence in that state, the Hells Angels approached Bandidos members in Louisiana with the intent to expand there.¹ On 25 September 2019, the Brothers East Motorcycle Club (referred to as B*EAST, pronounced “Beast”) attempted to take over Bandidos territory in Louisiana after several members of the Bandidos left for a weekend trip. The Bandidos threatened if the B*EAST was still in their territory when they returned, there would be a “war” and all motorcycle clubs that associate with or show support for the Bandidos were told to be armed in case the B*EAST attacked them.^{8, 9}

(U) Perspective

(U//LES) The Hells Angels and the Bandidos are both one-percenter OMGs known to produce, transport, and distribute drugs. They also commit other crimes such as murder, intimidation, extortion, prostitution, money laundering, weapons trafficking, theft of motorcycles and motorcycle parts, and arson. After the Hells Angels, the Bandidos is the second largest international OMG, with more than 2,000 members in more than 175 chapters across primarily the Pacific Northwest, Southeast, Southwest, and West Central regions. The influence and authority of the Bandidos significantly declined after the September 2018 convictions of its national president and national vice-president on federal Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organization (RICO) charges. Following resulting leadership changes, many Bandidos members deserted the club and created or joined OMGs in direct opposition of the Bandidos. The Bandidos aligned with the Hells Angels as a result of rival OMGs taking advantage of their weakened status, while the Hells Angels exploited the profits that came with access to the Bandidos’ geographical territories. Because of their ties to crime, the presence of OMGs often leads to violence. The alignment of OMGs is commonly viewed adversely by rival OMGs and contributes to ongoing animosities and violent confrontations that frequently occur in public, threatening the safety of bystanders.^{10, 11}

(U//LES) This assessment is consistent with previously disseminated intelligence from law enforcement partners. According to a 5 March 2019 New Mexico All Source Intelligence Center assessment, (U//LES) *Possible Texas Bandidos and Hells Angels Alliance*, geographic proximity would cause increased confrontations between the Bandidos, the Hells Angels and their rivals. An April 2019 Western States Information Network special bulletin, “(U//LES) Outlaw Motorcycle Gang Activity–2018,” assessed the Bandidos’ weakened state led to the Mongols’ rapid expansion into former Bandidos-dominated territories. The special bulletin also indicated this expansion would lead to an increase in violence that would have an impact on local law enforcement. In a 3 June 2019 OMG intelligence note, “(U//LES) Possible Alliance between Montana Bandidos and Hells Angels,” the Montana Analysis and Technical Information Center assessed the Bandidos and Hells Angels signed a truce and their collaboration would continue to develop and increase the potential for violence. The present

ⁱ (U//FOUO) *Analyst Note*: According to FBI reports, the Bandidos have 580 members and support members in Louisiana.

bulletin expands on these products by substantiating the alliance with reporting based on FBI human sources and incorporates the FBI's national strategic perspective on the impact of the alliance.

(U) Analysis of Alternatives

(U//LES) The FBI considered the alternative hypothesis that Hells Angels and Bandidos likely are forming an alliance to carry out nonviolent business arrangements. The FBI discounted this alternative because the evidence shows Hells Angels and Bandidos sustained their collaborative expansion against rivals and exhibited intentions to increase their hostile behavior toward rivals. No adequate quantitative evidence disputed the main assessment. Reporting indicating that the Hells Angels and Bandidos alliance is eroding or that shows the gangs are entering into business deals would support this alternative and cause the FBI to re-evaluate the main assessment.

(U) Outlook

(U//LES) The FBI assesses the Hells Angels and Bandidos alliance likely will increase the gangs' presence across the United States and escalate the number of violent confrontations with rival OMGs in the near future, resulting in a heightened threat to public safety nationwide. An indicator would be a documented upsurge of law enforcement responses to crises arising from violent confrontations between the Hells Angels and Bandidos with rival OMGs in public venues. In the long term, the FBI judges the ongoing geographic expansion of these OMGs likely will help them to engage in larger-scaled, profitable criminal activities, causing an influx of clashes between OMGs and law enforcement entities. A possible long-term indicator would be a palpable increase of drug sales and transportation, money laundering, weapons trafficking, motorcycle and motorcycle parts theft, human trafficking, and prostitution in areas infiltrated by the Hells Angels and Bandidos.

(U) If you would like to provide qualitative feedback on this product, please send an email to the appropriate address with the product title as the subject line: DI_Customer_Feedback@fbi.gov; DI_Customer_Feedback@fbi.sgov.gov; or DI_Customer_Feedback@fbi.ic.gov.

(U) The Criminal Investigative Division, National Gang Intelligence Unit of the FBI prepared this intelligence bulletin. Please direct comments and queries to the Unit Chief at 1-703- 414-8580.

(U) Appendix A: Expressions of Likelihood

(U) Phrases such as “the FBI judges” and “the FBI assesses,” and terms such as “likely” and “probably” convey analytical judgments and assessments. The chart below approximates how expressions of likelihood and probability correlate with percentages of chance. Only terms of likelihood should appear in FBI products; the chart includes terms of probability strictly for comparison, as they sometimes appear in reporting of other government agencies. Furthermore, the FBI does not arrive at judgments through statistical analysis and will not use terms of probability to convey uncertainty in FBI external intelligence products.

UNCLASSIFIED

Terms of Likelihood	Almost No Chance	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Roughly Even Chance	Likely	Very Likely	Almost Certain(ly)
Terms of Probability	Remote	Highly Improbable	Improbable (Improbably)	Roughly Even Odds	Probable (Probably)	Highly Probable	Nearly Certain
Percentages of Chance	1-5%	5-20%	20-45%	45-55%	55-80%	80-95%	95-99%

(U) Table showing terms of likelihood aligned with terms of probability and percentages of chance.

(U) Appendix B: Confidence in Assessments and Judgments Based on a Body of Information

(U) Confidence levels reflect the quality and quantity of the source information supporting a judgment. Consequently, the FBI ascribes high, medium, or low levels of confidence to assessments, as follows:

(U) **High confidence** generally indicates the FBI's judgments are based on high quality information from multiple sources. High confidence in a judgment does not imply the assessment is a fact or a certainty; such judgments might be wrong. While additional reporting and information sources may change analytical judgments, such changes are most likely to be refinements and not substantial in nature.

(U) **Medium confidence** generally means the information is credibly sourced and plausible but not of sufficient quality or corroborated sufficiently to warrant a higher level of confidence. Additional reporting or information sources have the potential to increase the FBI's confidence levels or substantively change analytical judgments.

(U) **Low confidence** generally means the information's credibility or plausibility is uncertain, the information is too fragmented or poorly corroborated to make solid analytic inferences, or the reliability of the sources is questionable. Absent additional reporting or information sources, analytical judgments should be considered preliminary in nature.

(U) Appendix C: Department of Justice OMG Definition

(U) The US Department of Justice has determined OMGs fall within its definition of a gang, which reads as follows:

(U) Definition of Gangs: (1) an association of three or more individuals; (2) whose members collectively identify themselves by adopting a group identity which they use to create an atmosphere of fear or intimidation frequently by employing one or more of the following: a common name, slogan, identifying sign, symbol, tattoo or other physical marking, style or color of clothing, hairstyle, hand sign or graffiti; (3) the association's purpose, in part, is to engage in criminal activity and the association uses violence or intimidation to further its criminal objectives; (4) its members engage in criminal activity, or acts of juvenile delinquency that if committed by an adult would be crimes; (5) with the intent to enhance or preserve the association's power, reputation, or economic resources; (6) the association may also possess some of the following characteristics: (a) the members employ rules for joining and operating within the association; (b) the members meet on a recurring basis; (c) the association provides physical protection of its members from other criminals and gangs; (d) the association seeks to exercise control over a particular location or region, or it may simply defend its perceived interests against rivals; or (e) the association has an identifiable structure. (7) This definition is not intended to include traditional organized crime groups such as La Cosa Nostra, groups that fall within the Department's definition of "international organized crime," drug trafficking organizations or terrorist organizations.

(U) *Source:* Website / US Department of Justice | "Definition of Gangs" | <http://www.justice.gov/criminal-ocgs/gallery/outlaw-motorcycle-gangs-omgs> | accessed on 8 May 2015.

(U) Appendix D: Historical Context of Bandidos' Diminishing Influence

(U) The Bandidos was founded in 1965 in San Leon, Texas. Until recently, the Bandidos was the most prominent OMG in Texas.

(U) In May 2015, a confrontation involving the Bandidos and members of other motorcycle clubs in Waco, Texas, killed 9 persons and injured at least 20. This incident resulted in the 2016 arrests of several Bandidos senior members and the acting Bandidos national president removed many of the gang's remaining senior members. A group of ex-Bandidos formed the Kinfolk one percenter Motorcycle Club, composed of "out in bad standing" Bandidos members. Kinfolk chapters planned for locations previously held and defended as Bandidos territory. Ex-Bandidos pledged a willingness to challenge the integrity, territory, and authority of the Bandidos while provoking and inciting violence toward the Bandidos and their support clubs "on sight." Additionally, in 2018, more than 100 Bandidos members defected and joined the rival Mongols in response to the ousting of the former Bandidos president. This feud is ongoing and the Bandidos stronghold in Texas is diminishing.

(U) *Source:* Press release | US Department of Justice | "Jury Convicts Bandidos Outlaw Motorcycle Organization Leadership on All Federal Charges" | 17 May 2018