

Regional Integrated Ballistic Information Network

Background

The Regional Integrated Ballistic Information Network targets ‘crime guns’ through ballistic identification and sharing of information among CARICOM Member States’ law enforcement, border and customs control agencies and ultimately with potential source countries.

At the Fifth Meeting of the Council of Ministers responsible for National Security and Law Enforcement (CONSLE) in 2008, the meeting endorsed a Regional Integrated Ballistic Information Network (RIBIN) with the use of Automated Ballistic Identification Systems (ABIS) which would comprise a minimum four (4) key components:

- Ballistic Scanner,
- Signature Extraction Unit,
- Data Storage Unit and
- Correlation Server.

This would be done through the linking of Integrated Ballistic Information Systems (IBIS) in the CARICOM Member States and Associate Members.

Objective and Impact

RIBIN serves as a regional network for information sharing among law enforcement, border and customs control agencies, with a view to preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons across borders. This is exemplified by the establishment of the Canadian Ballistic Information Network (CIBIN), the United States’ National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) and the linking of these two networks as well as the Interpol Ballistic Information Network (IBIN), and is in accordance with the obligations of the United Nations Programme of Action (PoA),

States that have begun using IBIS, are able to obtain information using automated comparisons and correlations among a number of pieces of crime scene evidence entered. IBIS capability has been leveraged as a tool for international collaboration among law enforcement agencies worldwide as countries have linked their IBIS through regional networks. The sharing of ballistic intelligence across jurisdictional boundaries would enable regional and national law enforcement agencies to collaborate, apprehend and prosecute violent criminals, thereby preventing other potential crimes from occurring.

Status

CARICOM RIBIN was operationalized with the linkage of three (3) CARICOM countries on the IBIN platform in 2014, namely Barbados, Belize and Jamaica, . More recently in 2018, Trinidad and Tobago became the fourth (4th) country from CARICOM to join IBIN/ RIBIN. Additionally, the network expanded in 2019 as five (5) CARICOM Associate Members: Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands and Turks and Caicos and one (1) CARICOM Member State: Montserrat; have joined IBIN. In this case, the Cayman Islands will act as the hub given that the server is located there. Additionally, double casting training and equipment was provided to local law enforcement and firearm examiners in four (4) CARICOM Member States in 2018 - the Commonwealth of Dominica, Haiti, St. Kitts and Nevis and Suriname with four (4) persons

trained from each State; through funding from the 10th European Development Fund. The remaining Member States had received this through an assistance package delivered by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC).

A governance framework for RIBIN was also established in keeping with the mandate from CONSLE vis-a-vis a RIBIN Board and RIBIN Technical Committee. The RIBIN Board was constituted to address the oversight and management of RIBIN as well as the protocols and procedures which must be adhered to by Participating States using the system. The RIBIN Technical Committee was established to address the issues of training of firearms examiners and ballistic experts and make recommendations for training and certification.

CARICOM IMPACS continues to support and facilitate strengthened cooperation among Caribbean states and international partners on addressing firearms trafficking and strengthening forensic ballistics information sharing. In so doing, it has developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Sharing of Ballistic Information under RIBIN and Standard Operating Procedures for the Transmittal of Ballistic Evidence to provide standardized guidelines for the submission of firearms evidence to IBIS laboratories.