



ANNUAL INVESTIGATIONS AND OPERATIONS REPORT

Anti-Corruption and Anti-Terrorism Agency

“Securing Barbados Through Integrity.”

ANNUAL INVESTIGATIONS AND OPERATIONS REPORT

(December^{2nd}, 2025)

Mission Statement

To promote integrity, accountability, and protect the national security of Barbados by combating corruption and countering terrorism.

Mandate

To implement measures to prevent, investigate, detect and prosecute offences relating to corruption and terrorism.

Core Values

- Accountability
 - Integrity
 - Adherence to Rule of Law
 - Teamwork
-

About this Report

This Annual Report, covering the period October 2024 to October 2025, is submitted in accordance with Section 31 of the Anti-Corruption and Anti-Terrorism Act, 2021-5, which mandates the preparation of an Annual Plan and Performance Report. The document presents a consolidated overview of the Agency's performance, operational activities, analytical outputs, casework, and strategic interventions undertaken during the reporting period.

Structured into key areas Institutional Overview, Operational Focus, Analytical Assessments, Systemic Findings, Corruption and Terrorism Dynamics, Integrity Testing, and Forward Strategy, it is designed not only to summarize activities but also to provide deeper insight into the drivers of corruption and terrorism, the vulnerabilities that enable these threats, and the Agency's evolving response framework. For security and confidentiality reasons, certain information concerning ongoing investigations, intelligence operations, and interagency coordination has been deliberately withheld to

safeguard operational integrity and protect sensitive sources and methods.

Concepts and Terminology

To ensure clarity and consistency across the report, the following definitions guide the interpretation of key terms used throughout the document:

Corruption:

Conduct constituting an offence under Part II of the Prevention of Corruption Act, including but not limited to offering, soliciting, or accepting an undue advantage to influence performance of duties, bribery of public and foreign officials, trading in influence, and other related corrupt transactions.

Terrorism:

Any act (or treaty-specified offence) intended to intimidate the public or compel a government or organisation, and intended to cause death, serious harm, serious public risk, serious property damage, or serious disruption of essential services, as defined in section 3 of the Anti-Terrorism Act Cap. 158 for ideological, political, or religious objectives.

Integrity Testing:

Structured assessments, used to evaluate the honesty, reliability, and susceptibility of officials, systems, or processes to corrupt influence or compromised behavior.

Financial Crime:

Offences involving illicit financial gain, including money laundering, proceeds of crime, under-invoicing, tax evasion, and fraudulent manipulation of trade or financial systems.

Security Threats:

Actions, networks, or vulnerabilities that compromise the national security infrastructure of Barbados, including organized criminal groups, smuggling operations, infiltration of public institutions, and emerging terrorism-related activity.

Systemic Vulnerabilities:

Weaknesses within processes, oversight mechanisms, or institutional culture that consistently enable corruption, crime, or security breaches at borders, off pier cargo facilities and points of entry.

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Remarks by the Director General

The 2024–2025 fiscal year marked a decisive period of institutional strengthening, capacity building, and investigative advancement within the Anti-Corruption and Anit-Terrorism Agency (ACAT). Through its operational divisions including the Standardized Vetting Unit (SVU), the Agency pursued a dual mission of educating and enforcing against corruption and terrorism, financial crime, and related security threats. The Agency’s operations reflected an integrated approach combining intelligence analysis, investigative coordination, and institutional education to identify and address vulnerabilities across national security frameworks.



During the year, the Agency uncovered a series of major security and organized crime risks, including under-invoicing schemes, vehicle smuggling networks, and the deliberate manipulation of customs procedures, import documentation, and security systems. These investigations also extended into areas of public misconduct, money laundering, and national security threats involving the movement of prohibited materials and potential emerging terrorism-related financing. While several investigations remain ongoing, their preliminary findings have already informed recommendation for targeted policy reforms, workflow modernization, and the design of preventive integrity systems across key enforcement and trade agencies. Collectively, these actions underscore ACAT's commitment to safeguarding national integrity, strengthening economic security, and reinforcing the rule of law through proactive intelligence and systemic intervention.

To strengthen the integrity framework, the Agency recommends establishing a defensible baseline of risk exposure through structured integrity testing and longitudinal monitoring. In addition, the creation of a dedicated Professional Standards Unit, supported by a comprehensive training and capacity-building programme, will reinforce ethical conduct, enhance operational consistency, and improve internal accountability. Together, these measures would enhance the detection and deterrence of misconduct while advancing a culture of transparency, professionalism, and organisational responsibility within the department.

In parallel, the Agency formally established the Joint Operations Task Force (JOTF), a multi-agency platform designed to unify investigative intelligence and operational coordination across the Serious Organized Crime (SOCU), Fraud, Financial Investigation (FIU) Units of The Barbados Police Service and the, Financial Intelligence Unit. This integrated framework has significantly strengthened ACAT's capacity to take proactive and decisive action against corruption, organized crime, and other high-risk financial and security threats. By consolidating intelligence streams, sharing analytical expertise, and coordinating operational planning, the JOTF has enhanced the Agency's ability to map complex criminal networks, understand their interconnections, and anticipate potential exploitations of institutional and regulatory vulnerabilities.

The collaboration fostered through the JOTF has also deepened the understanding of organized criminal systems, revealing patterns of facilitation, enabling conditions, and procedural loopholes that sustain illicit activity. This insight has been instrumental in informing the design of targeted investigations.

Despite these advancements, certain limitations remain that impact the full operational effectiveness of the ACAT. These limitations are acknowledged and discussed in detail in later sections of this report, along with strategies proposed to address them in the coming fiscal year.

About the Agency

Statutory Mandate of the Agency



The Anti-Corruption and Terrorism Agency (ACAT) derives its authority from the Anti-Corruption and Anti-Terrorism Act, 2021-5, which mandates the Agency to prevent, detect, investigate, and support the prosecution of offences related to corruption, terrorism, and associated criminal conduct. ACAT works collaboratively with domestic, regional, and international partners to strengthen Barbados' security framework through intelligence sharing, joint enforcement initiatives, and strategic development.

Role and Function

The Agency's statutory functions encompass a wide range of responsibilities designed to ensure the effective prevention and suppression of corruption and terrorism. These include the implementation of preventive and detection measures, the receipt and investigation of complaints, and the prosecution of related offences. ACAT is also tasked with gathering, processing, analysing, and disseminating information relevant to combating these crimes, as well as coordinating and cooperating with law enforcement, regulatory bodies, and other competent authorities locally and abroad.

In exercising its investigative authority, the Agency may initiate inquiries into any act or suspected offence that appears, on reasonable grounds, to involve corruption or terrorism. This includes cases where the Director-General determines that the offence is transnational in nature, poses a significant threat to national security or public safety, or where there exists good reason to examine the affairs of an individual or organization.

Beyond its enforcement mandate, ACAT also bears a preventative and developmental responsibility to enhance public confidence that persons involved in corruption, terrorism and related acts will be brought to justice. The Agency is equally committed to education, awareness, and compliance advocacy, working to foster a culture of transparency, ethical conduct, and adherence to the rule of law across both public and private sectors.

Institutional Composition and Structure

The Anti-Corruption and Terrorism Agency (ACAT) are a multidisciplinary institution combining investigative, analytical, and operational abilities within a single operational framework. The Agency is comprised of:

- **Anti-corruption** – responsible for case development, evidence gathering, intelligence, analysis and interagency coordination, on corruption related matters.
- **Anti-Terrorism** – responsible for case development, evidence gathering, intelligence, analysis and interagency coordination, on terrorism related matters.
- **Integrity and Compliance** – tasked with oversight of preventive mechanisms, education, and the administration of integrity screening processes.
- **Security Clearance Program (SVU)** – Administers vetting, and Integrity Testing.

Integration of the Standardized Vetting Unit (SVU)

During the reporting year, the administration and superintendence of the Standardized Vetting Unit (SVU) were formally devolved to ACAT, marking a significant institutional enhancement. The SVU now functions as an integrated part of ACAT's Integrity and Compliance mandate, ensuring that vetting and continuous assessment are executed under a unified standard. This consolidation allows for an integrated approach to safeguarding the integrity of public officials, enforcement officers, and other individuals occupying sensitive or fiduciary positions.

Situational Analysis- Barbados

Contemporary Threat Environment and Implications for National Security

During the 2024–2025 review period, Barbados faced a rapidly evolving security environment shaped by both domestic criminal activity and international illicit networks. The Anti-Corruption and Anti-Terrorism Agency (ACAT) operated in an environment of heightened public concern, increased scrutiny, and growing evidence that corruption and organized crime function as mutually reinforcing threats. These dynamics informed ACAT's investigative priorities, policy decisions, and operational interventions, highlighting the need for integrated and proactive strategies to address corruption, firearms trafficking, and broader national security risks.

Firearms Trafficking as the Principal Driver of Violence

The illicit importation of firearms remained a central driver of violent crime. Weapons used in murders, gang activity, and general disorder are typically sourced externally and smuggled through regional transshipment hubs, concealed within legitimate cargo streams. ACAT intelligence indicates that traffickers exploit compromised personnel, forged documentation, misclassified shipments, and private-sector facilitators, including brokers and logistics handlers to enable these operations. Firearms trafficking is highly organized and closely linked to other illicit activities such as drug trafficking, vehicle fraud, and transnational money laundering. These interdependencies create a complex threat environment that will be examined in detail in subsequent sections.

Corruption and Border Compromise

A major concern for ACAT is the degree to which corruption within border-control environments facilitates the movement of illicit firearms and other prohibited goods.

In addition to overt misconduct, ACAT assessments highlight the influence of culturally normalized practices such as gift-giving, favours, and informal payments. While seemingly minor, these behaviours weaken professional integrity and create the permissive environment in which more serious forms of corruption can flourish. The cumulative impact of these practices is addressed in greater detail later in the report.

Local and International Factors Shaping ACAT's Decisions

ACAT's operational decisions during the review period were shaped by a combination of domestic and international factors. Domestically, rising violent crime mainly firearm enabled murders, evolving coordination between local and foreign criminal networks. Public concern over safety and institutional credibility further guided resource prioritization. Internationally, partner agencies increased intelligence-sharing which focused on Caribbean and international trends, advances in evasion techniques, growth in trade-based money laundering, and security concerns. This insight into operation shifts reinforced ACAT's shift toward risk-based, intelligence-led operations.

Consequences for National Well-Being and Institutional Resilience

The convergence of corruption, firearms trafficking, and organized crime poses significant risks to public safety, governance, and economic stability. Firearm-related

violence undermines community cohesion, fuels youth gang recruitment, and erodes public trust in security institutions. Beyond immediate impacts, violence also imposes other socio-economical consequences.

Institutional trust deteriorates when corruption, real or perceived, affects frontline enforcement agencies. This weakens morale, increases vulnerability to exploitation, and diminishes operational effectiveness. Economically, persistent criminal activity threatens business activity in law-and-order sensitive enterprises such as, tourism, discourages investment, distorts legitimate markets, and undermines revenue collection.

Strategic Implications for ACAT

The 2024–2025 review period highlights that corruption and organized crime continue to operate in ways that influence each other, with firearms trafficking remaining an important contributing factor.

In response, ACAT has focused on uncovering the factors that weaken border integrity, improving intelligence-sharing capabilities, expanding integrity-testing initiatives within higher-risk agencies, and deepening analytical work related to trade-based financial activity and potential facilitation. These efforts support a coordinated, approach to firearm interdiction and help reinforce institutional safeguards across key sectors, thereby enhancing Barbados’ overall resilience to corruption and organized criminal activity.

Activities and Operations

ACAT’s ongoing intelligence analysis and operational efforts indicate that the illicit trade and trafficking environment in Barbados has evolved from largely opportunistic activity into a more structured and diversified criminal enterprise, encompassing the trafficking of goods, illicit drugs, and firearms. These networks exploit vulnerabilities through economic manipulation, distortion, and compromise.

During the reporting period, ACAT advanced multiple high-priority investigations into corruption, illicit importation, and financial misconduct. Intelligence gathered from these investigations has informed risk assessments and will support the development of national enforcement priorities.

Significant Findings

Operational Processes and Concealment

Our investigations indicate that organised criminal operations in Barbados and the wider Caribbean are highly compartmentalised, with tasks such as documentation, container handling, transportation, and delivery deliberately separated. This structure creates plausible deniability, as participants appear to perform routine commercial or logistical functions. Financial transactions are similarly layered, using small cash transfers, informal remittance systems, or front businesses, often complemented by trade-based money laundering, including under-invoicing and manipulated shipment records.

These networks employ sophisticated and adaptive concealment techniques to obscure the movement and storage of illicit commodities, exploiting both material concealment and socio-economic vulnerabilities. Methods range from modified shipping containers and hidden compartments to unconventional everyday items that evade standard detection protocols. For example, in March 2025, UK Border Force officers, supported by the UK National Crime Agency, intercepted a motorised wheelchair arriving from Bridgetown, Barbados, containing cocaine valued at approximately £1 million; the passenger was charged with drug smuggling. Around the same period, a similar seizure was reported by the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, involving a wheelchair used to conceal cocaine on a flight from Barbados in August 2025.² While direct intelligence linking these seizures to the below mentioned case is not established, the recurrence of wheelchairs as concealment vectors suggests a pattern of operational adaptation, potentially reflecting shared tactics or networks.

A complementary example of residential concealment emerged in April 2025, when the Barbados Police Service's Narcotics Unit and Financial Crimes Unit charged Abu Zarr Hans (21), Lisa Cecelia Walcott (55), and Destiny Alisa Miracle Greenidge (19) with possession with intent to supply 10.6 kilograms of cocaine, valued at approximately BBD \$530,000, hidden within a residence in Welchman Hall, St. Thomas. Hans and Greenidge also faced money laundering charges of BBD \$36,667.00 with Hans separately charged with an additional BBD \$69,802.45. This case demonstrates how high-value contraband can be stored in household contexts, insulating higher-level coordinators from direct exposure and exploiting everyday spaces as part of broader concealment strategies.

Taken together, these cases highlight a multi-layered approach to trafficking and concealment: operational compartmentalisation, financial layering, and creative use of both domestic and transport concealment. The similarity in tactics, particularly the use of mobility devices and household settings, underscores the need for enhanced detection

protocols, inter-agency intelligence sharing, and proactive monitoring of high-risk vectors, both locally and in regional supply chains.

Trade Manipulation, Bribery-for-Clearance, and Smuggling Networks

Investigations at key logistical nodes, including Bridgetown Port, Grantley Adams International Airport (GAIA), and off-pier cargo terminals, document recurring patterns of bribery-for-clearance and structured smuggling.

Organized networks have deliberately targeted enforcement and state entities, including:

- Barbados Coast Guard
- Marine Section and Drug Squad of The Barbados Police Service
- Barbados Postal Service
- Barbados Port Inc.
- Customs and Excise Department
- Grantley Adams International Airport personnel

Trade Based Fraud

Investigations into trade-based fraud and customs-related offences identified the deliberate undervaluation of imported goods as a recurring method to circumvent customs duties. Inconsistent auditing allow importers to reduce payable taxes while also creating opportunities to conceal contraband within legitimate cargo. Limited access to real-time trade data, insufficient inter-agency information sharing, and reliance on manual or random audit checks further exacerbate these vulnerabilities.

Trade Based Money Laundering

Financial crime investigations revealed coordinated money-laundering operations in which suspect funds were moved through multiple personal and business accounts to obscure beneficial ownership, often in small to medium amounts that avoided reporting thresholds. These operations were frequently intertwined with subtle forms of corruption, and other informal inducements that appear as routine business practices but effectively secured preferential treatment at border control points. Such findings underscore the convergence of financial manipulation and operational facilitation, reflecting how minor, culturally normalized practices can mask the compromise of institutional integrity.

Misconduct

Instances of direct abuse of public office were also observed. For example, a case within the public domain, where criminal proceedings involving a Barbados Customs officer charged under the Prevention of Corruption Act. This highlights the risks associated with

discretionary authority at operational points.

Asset Recovery

Of note, an asset recovery operation conducted during the period highlighted the effectiveness of coordinated multi-agency enforcement efforts. Confiscation proceedings arising from drug-trafficking and firearms offences led to the recovery of more than BDS \$1.4 million in cash, property, and other assets. Two individuals who previously served with The Barbados Police Service formed part of the operational team, including one officer now attached to the ACAT agency who played a significant role in the asset-recovery component. This collaboration among enforcement and regulatory partners demonstrated the value of integrated investigative work in disrupting organized criminal networks.

Procedural Vulnerability

Procedural and systemic vulnerabilities were further highlighted through the review of the importation systems. Inconsistent data entry, limited audit trails, and insufficient integration with other regulatory databases reduced the system's ability to detect anomalies in import declarations, under-invoicing, and misclassification of goods.

The UK Stolen Vehicle Racket

The Transnational Threat



ACAT's investigations during the 2024–2025 reporting period identified a significant and previously underestimated transnational criminal network responsible for trafficking stolen vehicles from the United Kingdom into Barbados. This illicit supply chain leverages vulnerabilities across both jurisdictions: advanced vehicle theft operations and fraudulent export documentation in the UK.

The UK Stolen Vehicle Export Pipeline

ACAT's findings align with broader international trends reported by Thatcham Research and the UK's National Vehicle Crime Intelligence Service (NaVCIS). Despite improvements in vehicle security, organised criminal groups in the UK continue to target

high-value vehicles, particularly SUVs and premium brands, for export to foreign markets. Between 2021 and 2025, approximately 79% of intercepted outbound stolen vehicles were SUVs, with over half belonging to premium or luxury manufacturers. These vehicles are frequently shipped within days of theft, using forged export documentation to mask their illicit origin. Global destination analysis shows that jurisdictions such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, United Arab Emirates, Cyprus, Jamaica, and Georgia are popular endpoints, particularly where import-control systems may be less stringent or heavily reliant on documentation.

National Security, Economic, and Reputational Risks

- The infiltration of stolen vehicles into Barbados poses multidimensional risks:
- Economic risk, due to revenue leakage from undervaluation and duty evasion.
- Market distortion, as illegitimately sourced vehicles undercut legitimate importers.
- National security threats, where profits fuel organised crime networks with links to drug trafficking, firearms importation, and money laundering.
- Reputational harm should Barbados be perceived internationally as a permissive environment for vehicle re-registration and export-fraud.

Public Sensitization on Corruption



During the 2024–2025 period, ACAT placed renewed emphasis on public sensitization as a core pillar of its national security mandate. The Agency’s website continued to serve as the primary outreach platform, recording a consistent increase in daily traffic, averaging between 300 and 600 visits per day. This steady growth reflects heightened public interest in ACAT’s work and the value placed on credible, accessible information regarding corruption matters.

To build on this momentum, ACAT is proactively expanding its existing suite of public-facing materials, which already includes concise synopses of corruption issues, relevant statutes, updates on developments, curated links to reputable local and international anti-corruption resources, and the Agency’s confidential whistle-link reporting platform. These resources continue to form the foundation of ACAT’s public education efforts.



In addition to these established features, ACAT has begun developing new editorials, informational articles, and thematic briefs aimed at further broadening public understanding of corruption risks, organized criminal activity, and the importance of integrity in public service. This expanded content is intended to deepen public engagement, provide clearer context for emerging issues, and strengthen the Agency’s role as a trusted source of national anti-corruption guidance.

Social media engagement is also being positioned for expansion, with plans to integrate it as a fully developed outreach channel rather than a supplementary communication tool. By enhancing digital presence across platforms, ACAT aims to

increase transparency, promote public awareness, and strengthen community resilience through timely, accurate, and relevant information.

Together, these initiatives will facilitate a more comprehensive, citizen-focused approach to engagement, building not only awareness but public confidence in the national anti-corruption framework.

Anti-Corruption Limitations 2025-2025

Limited Cooperation

A key obstacle to achieving optimal performance remains the limited cooperation from some strategic partners and agencies, which in certain cases may be compromised by maladministration or compromised by corruption. These limitations have occasionally slowed the progress of complex investigations and have highlighted the need for clearer frameworks for inter-agency collaboration. Similarly, there continues to be reluctance among members of the public to move beyond making allegations or informal hints of corruption to providing substantive evidence or formal statements, a challenge that underscores the importance of public trust-building and whistle blowing mechanisms.

Memoranda of Understanding

Despite these limitations, ACAT has worked to strengthen its institutional partnerships and build an integrated national enforcement environment. Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) have been agreed with the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), and the Barbados

Revenue Authority (BRA). Additional formal agreements will be required to ensure comprehensive cooperation across other enforcement and regulatory entities.

Overall, ACAT's operational environment is characterized by high expectations, resource and administrative challenges, and the ongoing evolution of its partnership framework. Yet, within this landscape, the Agency has maintained its focus on analytical objectivity, professional integrity, and adaptive strategy the hallmarks of its emerging reputation as Barbados' central anti-corruption and counter-terrorism authority.

Investigative Tools

ACAT remains committed to employing all available investigative techniques to effectively discharge its mandate. This includes the continued use of established intelligence, analytical, and operational tools, while remaining receptive to the introduction of additional capabilities, technologies, and collaborative mechanisms that may further strengthen investigative effectiveness and enhance overall enforcement outcomes.

Anti-Terrorism

During the reporting period, the Anti-Terrorism Unit provided primary support to the Agency's counter-terrorism intelligence and surveillance mandate, while also delivering targeted assistance to selected anti-corruption and organised crime investigations where operational requirements warranted such involvement. Activities were undertaken within an evolving local and regional security environment characterised by transnational criminal activity, identified corruption vulnerabilities, and exposure to extremist-related risk factors.

The Unit's contributions centred on intelligence-led surveillance support, continuous monitoring and assessment of potential threats, and the provision of analytical inputs to support informed operational and strategic decision-making. Where appropriate, these activities were conducted in coordination with relevant internal units and external partner agencies, and in full compliance with applicable legal, policy, and oversight frameworks.

International Overview

Islamic State

The Islamic State also known as IS, Daesh, or ISIS emerged as a major transnational terrorist organization during the period 2014 to 2019, during which it seized and controlled significant territory across parts of Syria and Iraq in an attempt to establish a self-proclaimed "caliphate." The group became notorious for its extreme violence, systematic

human rights abuses, and the recruitment and command of a large number of foreign fighters from multiple regions.

From 2015 onward, sustained military, intelligence, and law-enforcement actions by an international coalition significantly degraded the group's territorial control, operational capacity, and leadership structure.

While it no longer controls territory in Iraq or Syria but remains a persistent, adaptive, and decentralised transnational security threat. The group continues to exploit political fragmentation, weakened state authority, and evolving military postures across the Sahel, Iraq, and Syria. The international response is undergoing a structural transition, with coalition combat operations giving way to bilateral partnerships and advisory missions. While this shift reflects sovereignty and sustainability objectives, it also creates transitional risks that may allow IS affiliates to regenerate under favourable conditions.

Indeed, two recent events have rekindled concerns over a potential resurgence of ISIS-inspired activity. On 14 December 2025, the terrorist attack at Bondi Beach in Sydney, Australia, and the killing of American personnel in Syria, both reportedly inspired by ISIS the spectre of resurgence of its activities

Africa

In Africa, the withdrawal of Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso from ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African) and the establishment of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) has reshaped the regional security architecture. This realignment, coupled with the collapse of the G5 Sahel counterterrorism framework, has significantly degraded coordinated military operations and intelligence-sharing mechanisms in one of the world's most volatile regions. These developments have created exploitable governance and border-security gaps, enabling Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) and other jihadist actors to expand operational reach, recruit locally, and entrench themselves within illicit economies.

Iraq

In Iraq, the security environment remains fragile amid the planned conclusion of the Global Coalition's military mission by September 2025 and a transition toward bilateral security partnerships. While framed as an evolution rather than a withdrawal, the drawdown occurs against a backdrop of unresolved militia influence, particularly within the Popular Mobilization Forces, ongoing political contestation, and regional instability linked to Syria. International assessments caution that insufficiently managed transitions could provide Islamic State with opportunities to reconstitute operational capability.

Syria

In Syria, the post-Assad landscape remains highly fragmented following the emergence of new governing authorities and continued competition among domestic and external actors. The detention of thousands of Islamic State fighters and family members by the

Syrian Democratic Forces represents a critical vulnerability. International officials have warned that instability, funding disruptions, or force withdrawals could trigger mass escapes and renewed Islamic State mobilisation, with transnational implications.

Regional and National Assessment (Barbados)

Although geographically distant, these developments carry indirect but material relevance for Caribbean states, including Barbados. The decentralised model employed by Islamic State affiliates increases the likelihood that instability in Africa and the Middle East will generate secondary security effects, including terrorist financing risks, convergence with organised crime networks, maritime and transnational trafficking threats, online radicalisation, and heightened international compliance obligations. Collectively, these dynamics underscore the need for continued situational awareness and proactive engagement with international counterterrorism and security frameworks.

Operational Environment

During the reporting period, the operational environment was characterised by a convergence of organised criminal activity, cross-border movement, and extremist-related risk factors. Persistent access to illicit firearms, financial resources, and facilitation networks continued to create enabling conditions that could be exploited by hostile actors, including individuals influenced by regional and extra-regional extremist dynamics.

These conditions necessitated sustained intelligence-led monitoring and surveillance support, with particular emphasis on the early identification of risk indicators, travel-related activity, and emerging behavioural changes relevant to counter-terrorism objectives. While no direct terrorist activity was identified, the broader risk landscape required ongoing vigilance and preventative assessment.

Key contextual factors influencing operational activity during the period included the presence of transnational criminal networks with regional linkages.

- The availability of illicit firearms and ammunition.
- Exposure to extremist influences originating outside the jurisdiction.
- Corruption vulnerabilities impacting governance and law-enforcement effectiveness.
- The use of legitimate, cash-intensive businesses and real-estate investments to obscure criminal proceeds.

Operational Focus and Duties Performed

During the reporting period, the Units's operational focus remained centred on the delivery of intelligence-led surveillance and monitoring in support of the Agency's counter-terrorism mandate. Activities were structured to prioritise early detection of potential risks, including travel-related activity and behavioural changes associated with extremist or security-related concerns.

Analytical Perspective on Lone-Actor Risk

Consistent with contemporary counter-terrorism assessments, the most credible and challenging threat vector continues to be self-initiated or lone-actor violence. Such threats are inherently difficult to detect due to compressed mobilisation timelines, limited external communication, and minimal logistical or financial signatures.

Within existing resource constraints, monitoring efforts appropriately prioritised individuals already assessed as radicalised or at elevated risk, while recognising that lone-actor threats may also emerge from outside known cohorts.

Forward Look and Emerging Considerations

Barbados

External advisories and international security assessments continue to indicate that, while Barbados has no recent history of terrorism-related incidents, global threat dynamics affecting Western interests retain the potential to generate indirect and secondary effects across multiple jurisdictions. Contemporary counter-terrorism reporting highlights the increasingly decentralised nature of extremist activity, including the reliance on online radicalisation, facilitation networks, and convergence with organised crime, all of which reduce the relevance of geographic distance as a protective factor.

In this context, maintaining baseline counter-terrorism monitoring and situational awareness remains a prudent and proportionate approach. Barbados' profile as a major international tourism destination, financial services jurisdiction, and regional transit hub creates a level of exposure to global travel flows and financial movements that may be exploited, intentionally or opportunistically, by hostile actors. While the assessed threat level remains **low**, the potential impact of even isolated incidents necessitates continued preventative attention.

Regional

From a regional perspective, the Caribbean's increasing integration into global air travel networks, including the introduction and expansion of direct and indirect air routes linking North America, Europe, South America, and Africa, has implications for border security and risk screening. Increased passenger volumes and diversified routing patterns heighten the importance of effective border-related risk indicators, advance passenger information, and watchlist coordination with international partners.

Additionally, regional assessments consistently note the intersection of transnational organised crime, illicit firearms trafficking, and financial crime within the Caribbean basin. These factors create permissive environments that may be exploited by extremist facilitators or lone actors, particularly where legitimate travel, cash-based businesses, or informal financial mechanisms are involved. As such, continued emphasis on timely information exchange, inter-agency cooperation, and alignment with international

counterterrorism and aviation security standards will remain critical to sustaining national and regional resilience.

Standardized Vetting Unit (SVU)

Mandate of the SVU

The SVU is responsible for the national administration of integrity testing and pre-employment, periodic, and special assignment vetting for personnel who:

- Access national security installations
- Handle sensitive or classified information
- Perform duties in high-risk or corruption-prone environments
- Require clearance for protected Government facilities

Executive Summary

During the reporting period of September to December 2025, the Standardized Vetting Unit (SVU) advanced its mandate to conduct comprehensive vetting and integrity testing across Government agencies, national security installations, and designated private-sector partners requiring access to sensitive environments.

Despite financial and infrastructural limitations during the early months of operation, the Unit maintained operational integrity and delivered consistent, high-quality vetting outcomes. A total of **788 integrity assessments were completed, 533 EyeDetect tests and 255 polygraph examinations, across 11 Government agencies and 2 private entities**, reflecting the expanding national reliance on the SVU's services.

Operational Environment

The operational environment of the SVU during the reporting period was shaped by expanding national security demands, increased inter-agency reliance on integrity assessments, and the Unit's growing integration within ACAT's intelligence and investigative framework. As the mandate broadened to cover personnel working in sensitive government installations and high-risk sectors, the SVU operated within a

complex landscape requiring strict confidentiality, effective coordination, and continuous adaptation.

Expanding Screening Mandate

The Unit's responsibilities grew to include routine vetting for personnel in high-risk domains such as customs, procurement, law enforcement, and sectors with privileged access to sensitive information or government facilities. This expansion increased tests to test volume and required more structured prioritization and scheduling.

Inter-Agency Dependency

National agencies increasingly rely on the SVU for timely and accurate vetting results to support staffing, deployment, and operational decisions. This dependency reinforces the importance of standardized communication channels, secure information sharing, and clear expectations regarding turnaround times.

Capacity Building Across the Public Sector

The expanded cadre of newly trained and APA (American Polygraph Association)-certified examiners has significantly strengthened national vetting capability. In addition to conducting examinations, the SVU provided agencies with education on polygraph methodologies, ethical standards, and the proper application of integrity testing. This outreach helped improve understanding of the polygraph process, reinforce professional best practices, and promote a stronger culture of accountability.

Factors Impacting Operations

Logistics and Procurement

The SVU encountered several challenges related to logistics and procurement that affected its operational effectiveness, infrastructure, and long-term planning. Delays in the delivery of Case-Cracker systems, essential tools for accurate recording, monitoring, and quality control of polygraph examinations, meant that, although the majority of suites were eventually installed as requested, careful prioritization of high-risk personnel and critical assignments was required.

Procurement and supply chain constraints also impacted on the implementation of comprehensive physical security measures. Interim solutions were adopted to mitigate risks; however, the establishment of a fully secure environment for controlled testing areas and sensitive data storage was postponed due to delays in obtaining necessary equipment and materials.

Training and Capacity Development

Seventeen (17) officers from the Barbados Defence Force (BDF) and The Barbados Police Service (TBPS) successfully completed a ten-week professional polygraph training program. Sixteen (16) of these officers were seconded to ACAT, significantly expanding the Unit's operational capacity.

On September 3, 2025, the SVU officially commenced full operational testing. During this period, examiners participated in the APA Annual Conference, where they received advanced training in polygraph techniques, ethical standards, and best international practices, culminating in official APA certification. This professional development enhanced national capacity for integrity assessments and reinforced adherence to recognized standards across the public sector.

In October 2025, the Unit further strengthened its operational structure with the addition of clerical staff and a receptionist, improving administrative support, workflow management, and the efficiency of testing operations.

Proposed Reform of the NSCP (National Security Clearance Programme)

During the reporting period, operational experience revealed several structural and procedural gaps that indicate the need for targeted improvements to strengthen the long-term effectiveness of the National Security Clearance Programme (NSCP). These observations highlight that, to align with international standards and produce consistent, defensible, and risk-informed clearance outcomes, the NSCP should transition from its current testing-focused model toward a comprehensive, fully adjudicative vetting system.

Based on these observations, several priority areas for reform were identified. Foremost is the establishment of a formal adjudicative mechanism, the Security Clearance Review Panel (SCRPP), supported by an Appeal Board, to provide structured oversight of decisions involving the granting, suspension, denial, or revocation of security clearances. Operational experience also demonstrated the need to broaden the vetting framework beyond EyeDetect and Polygraph testing to incorporate background investigations, financial and lifestyle assessments, structured interviews, and intelligence-driven analytical processes. Strengthening investigative and analytical capacity were also identified as critical improvements.

Administrative

Investigations & Trial Guide

During the period under review, the Agency received an Anti-Corruption Investigation and Trial Guide with the support of the US_UK Criminal Justice Reform Project. The Guide provides tools and techniques to investigate and prosecute corruption from a Barbados perspective. The Agency shared copies with the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Visitors

Visitors to the Agency include officers from the National Crime Agency (NSA) of the United Kingdom (UK), officials from United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the UK Criminal Justice Advisor, Sirah Abraham and World Bank Official, Patrick Kaboya.

Our Commitment

"Integrity is not simply a principle, it is the foundation upon which public trust, national security and good governance are built."

The work of protecting Barbados is continuous.

Every day presents new challenges, new risks and new opportunities to strengthen the institutions that safeguard our democracy, protect public resources and preserve confidence in the rule of law.

The achievements highlighted throughout this publication demonstrate an Agency that continues to evolve alongside the threats it was created to confront. They reflect a commitment to professional investigation, strategic intelligence, institutional collaboration and the pursuit of excellence in public service.

- ✓ Behind every investigation is a commitment to fairness.
- ✓ Behind every intelligence assessment is a commitment to prevention.
- ✓ Behind every integrity examination is a commitment to accountability.
- ✓ Behind every partnership is a commitment to protecting the national interest.
- ✓ These commitments define who we are and how we serve.

Our Vision

Our vision extends beyond investigating crime.

It is to help build a Barbados where:

- Public institutions are trusted.
- Government is transparent and accountable.
- Legitimate businesses can compete fairly.
- Borders remain secure.
- Public resources are protected.
- Citizens have confidence in the rule of law.

These objectives cannot be achieved by law enforcement alone.

They require collaboration across Government, responsible private-sector leadership, engaged communities and citizens who believe that integrity is everyone's responsibility.

Together, these partnerships create stronger institutions and a more resilient nation.

**THE ABOVE IS A REDACTED VERSION OF THE
OFFICIAL ANTI-CORRUPTION & ANTI-TERRORISM
ANNUAL INVESTIGATIONS AND OPERATIONS
REPORT 2025.**