

[Home](#) > [Press releases and news](#) > Arms trafficking group uncovered in Albania and Kosovo*

Arms trafficking group uncovered in Albania and Kosovo*

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Authorities from Albania and Kosovo, supported by Eurojust and Europol, have disrupted an arms trafficking gang operating in both countries. The suspects were responsible for the supply, transport and sale of weapons and explosive materials, setting up an intricate import and export route towards the European Union. During a joint operation on 10 and 11 December, 14 suspects were arrested in Albania and Kosovo.

The criminal gang was responsible for the import, export, supply, transport and sale of weapons and explosive materials from Kosovo to Albania. It is suspected that the gang intended to set up a trafficking route towards the European Union. In addition to arms trafficking, the gang also trafficked drugs, mainly cocaine, from Albania to Kosovo.

In April this year, the Special Prosecutor's Office in Kosovo found out about the criminal group and launched its investigation. As the criminal group consisted of citizens from both Kosovo and Albania, judicial cooperation began. A joint



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methods to combat organised crime and terrorism.

The JIT enabled the Albanian and Kosovar authorities to work together efficiently and effective, exchanging information in real time. A joint operation was planned to arrest the members of the criminal group, search properties to seize arms and gather evidence.

On 10 and 11 December, authorities launched their joint operation. During their actions, eight suspects were arrested in Kosovo. Nine properties owned by the suspects were searched, where authorities seized 29 pistols, 3 long guns, over 2600 rounds of ammunition, 2 vehicles and electronic equipment. In Albania, six suspects were arrested and seven properties were searched. Authorities seized 23 firearms, a hand grenade, 470 rounds of ammunition, 3 vehicles, 10 mobile phones and a significant amount of money. Investigations are ongoing.

The following authorities were involved in the actions:

Albania: Prosecutor's Office at the Court of First Instance of General Jurisdiction of Tirana; State Police

Kosovo: Special Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Kosovo; Kosovo Police

* This designation is made without prejudice to positions on status and is in accordance with UNSCR 1244/ 1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

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- Vacancies
- Procurement
- JITs funding
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- Data protection
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- Legal Notice
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