

# Gulf Clan



## OVERVIEW

AS OF JANUARY 2026

The Gulf Clan, a.k.a. the Gaitanista Army of Colombia, is the largest and most powerful drug trafficking organization in Colombia. It was founded in 2006 by Juan de Dios Usuga, a.k.a. Giovanni, and his brother Dairo Antonio Usuga, a.k.a. Otoniel, as the criminal successor to the United Self Defense Forces of Colombia, a paramilitary group that demobilized in the mid-2000s.

### Operating Area

Colombia

### Members

Approximately 9,000

### Tactics And Targets

The Gulf Clan produces cocaine and traffics it to Central America and Mexico in go-fast boats, semi-submersible vessels, and containerized shipments. It also supplies cocaine to other drug trafficking organizations that smuggle it to the United States. The group generates additional income by taxing drug traffickers who smuggle cocaine through its territory and by engaging in migrant smuggling, illegal gold mining, extortion, and money laundering in areas under its control. The Gulf Clan often engages in targeted killings against rival criminal groups and Colombian politicians, security services, and civilians.

### Terrorist Group Designation

The US State Department designated the Gulf Clan a foreign terrorist organization and a Specially Designated Global Terrorist entity in December 2025.

## KEY LEADERS



### Jobanis de Jesus Avila Villadiego

*a.k.a. Chiquito Malo*

Gulf Clan leader; assumed control after the capture of Otoniel in 2021; was indicted on cocaine trafficking charges by a US federal grand jury in 2022; was sanctioned by the US Treasury Department in 2023



## Gulf Clan *(continued)*

### KEY LEADERS *(continued)*

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**Jose Gonzalo Sanchez Sanchez** [DECEASED]*a.k.a. Gonzalito*

Gulf Clan second-in-command; was sanctioned by the US Treasury Department in 2024; drowned after his boat capsized in early February 2026

**Orozman Orlando Osten Blanco***a.k.a. Rodrigo Flechas*

Gulf Clan third-in-command; was sanctioned by the US Treasury Department in 2024; probably assumed Gonzalito's role after his death

**Dairo Antonio Usuga** [DETAINED]*a.k.a. Otoniel*

Gulf Clan cofounder; was arrested in Colombia in 2021 and extradited to the United States in 2022; was sentenced to 45 years in prison in 2023

**Juan de Dios Usuga** [DECEASED]*a.k.a. Giovanni*

Gulf Clan cofounder; was killed by Colombian authorities during a raid in 2012

### NOTABLE ATTACKS

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**April 2025****Antioquia, Colombia**

The Gulf Clan assassinates dozens of Colombian police officers and soldiers over several weeks after Colombian authorities kill senior Gulf Clan leader Jose Miguel Demoya Hernandez.

**June-July 2022****Colombia**

The Gulf Clan kills 25 police officers in a series of coordinated attacks throughout Colombia.

**May 2022****Colombia**

The Gulf Clan conducts attacks across Colombia after the Colombian Government extradites Dairo Antonio Usuga to the United States.

