



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME

Study Guide

Agenda: Addressing the global trade in Opiates with emphasis on its relationship with illicit activities and reviewing the Afghan Opiate Trade Project.

ANNUAL WORLD SUMMIT 2024

INDEX



- 1. Letter from the Executive Board**
- 2. Overview of the Committee**
- 3. Introduction to the Agenda**
- 4. Key Features**
- 5. Existing Legal Conventions and Treaties**
- 6. Important Definitions**
- 7. History of Opiates**
- 8. Global Trafficking of Opiates**
- 9. Current Condition in Afghanistan**
- 10. Afghan Opiate Trade Project**
- 11. Consequences arising from Drug Trade of Opiates**

INDEX



- 12. Drug Cartels and Previous Drug Wars**
- 13. Case Around the World**
- 14. Current World Scenario**
- 15. Points of Discussions for Delegates**
- 16. Note for Delegates**
- 17. References**

Letter from the Executive Board



Dear Delegates,

The Executive Board of The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) welcomes each one of you to the Annual World Summit 2024.

The Annual World Summit, hosted by Jamnabai Narsee School, is an esteemed international forum where aspirant youth leaders convene to have provocative conversations about crucial global challenges. The event provides a valuable opportunity for students to engage in real-world diplomatic scenarios, exchange ideas, and develop a deeper understanding of the critical issues facing the international community. At the end of this conference, each of us who participated, no matter how little or how much, will have learned something new and strengthened our character.

The Executive Board recommends the delegates to be mindful of the fact that this study guide is just meant to be used as a foundation and it will be up to you to find out more about your country's positions regarding the topics and craft a coherent stance to take forward in order to resolve the issue.

UNODC's mission is to contribute to global peace and security, human rights and development by making the world safer from drugs, crime, corruption and extremism. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is a technical committee that requires resilience and a fierce mind-set along with empathy and sensitivity to the subject. Delegates will be required to present their individual cases and country stances with a thorough understanding of the agenda, while also being civil, tactful, and respectful as they voice their opinions. The Executive Board urges all delegates, irrespective of their experience, to actively engage in real-world diplomatic scenarios, exchange ideas, and develop a deeper understanding of the critical issues facing the international community.

While the agenda does highlight the trafficking of Opiates and illicit activity



Letter from the Executive Board

surrounding the same, the delegates are encouraged to research extensively on their country's policies, legal framework and put forth their views on their political situation and resolutions. The agenda does overlap with various other issues like manufacture of synthetic drugs, illegal trade routes etc.; the study guide provides an overview of the same.

Our voices are to be heard, acknowledged, considered, and reverberated. We advise all of you to use this opportunity to the fullest extent, to go above and beyond, to truly showcase your potential this year as delegates and showcase your capability to make tactful and precise decisions towards ideas of an improved global future.

Delegates, we urge you to challenge yourselves, be assertive, compassionate and diplomatic. Boldly give your views while being mindful of everyone, participate in thought-provoking discussions and work with everyone to positively reach a resolution that helps everyone. Most importantly, enjoy the AWS experience, the stimulating dialogue, the recreation of real world scenarios and the insight into global issues.

We invite each and everyone of you to make the most of this committee as we promise you a widened international perspective and an unforgettable experience.

Yours sincerely,

The UNODC Executive Board

Chairperson: Jannat Kapoor

Vice-Chairperson: Natanya George

Moderator: Riya Bali

Rapporteur: Shahnawaz Bilgrami



Overview of the Committee

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is a global leader in the fight against illicit drugs and international crime, in addition to being responsible for implementing the United Nations lead programme on extremism.

Established in 1997, UNODC has its headquarters in Vienna and it operates 20 field offices, as well as liaison offices in New York and Brussels. UNODC works to educate people throughout the world about the dangers of drug abuse and to strengthen international action against illicit drug production and trafficking and drug-related crime. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) operates within a comprehensive legal framework that guides its efforts to combat illicit drugs, organised crime, corruption, and extremism on a global scale. It has become a leading authority in promoting the rule of law, justice, and international cooperation in the face of transnational challenges.

At the heart of the UNODC legal framework lies the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC). Adopted in 2000, this convention serves as a cornerstone in the fight against organised crime, addressing critical aspects such as prevention, investigation, prosecution, and international cooperation. By encouraging states to align their legislation, enhance mutual legal assistance, and strengthen law enforcement capacities, the UNTOC provides a comprehensive approach to combat the activities of criminal networks.

In addition to the UNTOC, the UNODC operates within the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), which was adopted in 2003. The UNCAC aims to prevent and combat corruption globally, fostering cooperation among states and promoting the development of comprehensive domestic anti-corruption measures. By targeting bribery, embezzlement, money laundering, and asset recovery, the UNCAC emphasises the importance of transparency, integrity, and public participation in preventing corruption. By



Overview of the Committee

examining these legal frameworks, we gain insight into the UNODC multifaceted approach to tackling global crime, promoting justice, and upholding the rule of law.

With the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at its centre, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UNODC is dedicated to assisting Member States in putting them into practice. The 2030 Agenda unequivocally states that health-focused approaches to drug use, along with the rule of law and just, efficient, and humane judicial systems, are components and enablers of sustainable development.

UNODC also works to improve crime prevention and assist with criminal justice reform in order to strengthen the rule of law, promote stable and viable criminal justice systems and combat the growing threats of transnational organised crime and corruption. By working directly with Governments and Non-Governmental Organisations, UNODC field staff develop and implement drug control and crime prevention programmes tailored to countries' particular needs.

At the end of each year, UNODC releases the World Drug Report. The World Drug Report provides a thorough analysis of the global drug problem along with in-depth details on the illicit drug landscape. It offers projections and data on patterns in the manufacturing, trafficking, and use of cannabis, opium/heroin, coca/cocaine and amphetamine-type stimulants.

The following sections will delve deeper into the specific conventions, protocols, and initiatives that shape the UNODC work and contribute to a safer and more just world.



Introduction to the Agenda

The global trade in opiates is deeply intertwined with a myriad of illicit activities, presenting a complex web of challenges for law enforcement agencies, policymakers, and communities worldwide.

The sole source of opium is the opium poppy. For over two centuries, the opium poppy has been cultivated throughout China and mainland Southeast Asia. The mature plant produces a highly addictive latex that can be refined into opium for smoking or processed with specific chemicals to make morphine or heroin.

The production, trafficking, and consumption of opiates pose significant challenges to the international community, undermining social, economic, and political stability worldwide. From the streets of major cities to remote villages, the impact of opiates is felt far and wide, fueling addiction, crime, and violence. Furthermore, the nexus between the opiate trade and other illicit activities, such as money laundering, corruption, and extremism, presents a multifaceted threat to global security.

Criminal syndicates exploit vulnerable communities, leveraging the lucrative opiate trade to finance their operations and perpetuate violence. The vast profits generated from the illicit drug trade fuel corruption, weaken governance structures, and undermine the rule of law, posing significant challenges to sustainable development and peacebuilding efforts.

Afghanistan, often dubbed the "golden crescent" alongside neighbouring countries Pakistan and Iran, has long been recognized as the epicentre of opiate production. Decades of conflict, political instability, and socioeconomic hardship have created fertile ground for the cultivation of opium poppy, the raw material for heroin production.



Introduction to the Agenda

Opiates have become a crucial pillar of Afghanistan's economy and permeate the rural society to the extent that many communities, not only farmers, have become dependent on the income from opium to sustain their livelihoods. From cultivation and production to local distribution and international trade, all activities related to drug supply chains yield financial benefits for those involved.

To target the hub of the trade, the UNODC set forth the Afghan Opiate Trade Project, a flagship initiative aimed at addressing the root causes of opiate production and trafficking emanating from Afghanistan, one of the world's largest producers of opium. Since its inception, the project has made significant strides in enhancing law enforcement capacities, promoting alternative livelihoods, and fostering international cooperation.

Key Features

- 1. Opiates-** Opiates are derived from poppy plants and include morphine and codeine. They are widely used for pain relief but can also be deadly if misused. A key challenge is ensuring access for medical pain treatment, especially in developing countries, while addressing the illegal drug trade and powerful synthetic opioids like heroin, fentanyl, methadone, etc.
- 2. Global Market in Opiates-** Drugs such as opium are usually produced in third world countries, mainly Afghanistan, Myanmar and Colombia, however, the consumers of this drug are found all over the globe. To meet the needs of these consumers, trade routes are established. There are three primary routes to transport opiates globally from the producer countries to the western part of the globe, the Balkan route, the Northern route and the Southern route.
- 3. Interdicted activities -** Opioid overdose is one of the causes of death around the globe. These staggering amounts of deaths are fueled by drugs like fentanyl, heroin, morphine, and oxycodone. Illicit opioids and their trade have led to an increase in gang activity, weapons trafficking, human smuggling, cybercrime, and money laundering around the globe.
- 4. Manufacture of Synthetic Drugs-** Opiates and other dangerous substances are manufactured in clandestine labs that produce illegal substances. The unregulated environment in certain countries makes it difficult to control the quality and potency of the substances, leading to health risks for users. Synthetic opioids are a major cause of overdose deaths. Law enforcement faces challenges controlling these drugs due to their constant variations and online availability.



Key Features

5. Drug Cartels- Global authorities have been waging a deadly battle against drug cartels for years, but with limited success. Thousands of politicians, students, and journalists die in the conflict every year. Mexico has seen more than 360,000 homicides since 2006, when the government declared war on the cartels. Mexican drug cartels are leading suppliers of cocaine, heroin, fentanyl, and other illicit opiates to the United States.

The cartels and the drug trade fuel rampant corruption and violence in Mexico, contributing to tens of thousands of homicides in the country each year.

6. Afghan Opiate Trade Project- Afghan opium trafficking is a major international issue, harming health and security worldwide. The Afghan Opiate Trade Project seeks to enhance the international response to the problem by providing comprehensive and cohesive information about trends in the illicit Afghan opiate trade worldwide; raising awareness of the data and information required to enable research on the opiate trade and improve the drug research capacities of those nations most impacted by Afghan opiates.



Existing Conventions and Treaties

To assist member states in strengthening legal frameworks, enhancing border controls, and promoting international cooperation to prevent and combat acts of extremism, the UNODC implements key international drug control conventions.

Acting as the custodian of United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice, UNODC has the mandate to assist Member States in reforming their criminal justice systems to ensure the practical application of these standards.

1. Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime and the Protocols Thereto: The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, adopted by General Assembly resolution 55/25 of 15 November 2000, is the main international instrument in the fight against transnational organised crime. The Convention is a legally-binding instrument committing States which ratify it to taking a series of measures against transnational organised crime including the creation of domestic offences to combat the problem, the adoption of new, sweeping frameworks for mutual legal assistance, extradition, law enforcement cooperation and technical assistance and training. The Convention is further supplemented by three Protocols, which target specific areas and manifestations of organised crime: the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air; and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition.

2. Convention Against Corruption: The United Nations Convention against Corruption is the only legally binding universal anti-corruption instrument. The Convention covers five main areas: preventive measures, criminalization and law enforcement, international cooperation, asset recovery, and technical assistance and information exchange. The Convention covers many different



Existing Conventions and Treaties

forms of corruption, such as bribery, trading in influence, abuse of functions, and various acts of corruption in the private sector.

3. Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961: This Convention aims to combat drug abuse by coordinated international action. There are two forms of intervention and control that work together. First, it seeks to limit the possession, use, trade in, distribution, import, export, manufacture and production of drugs exclusively to medical and scientific purposes. Second, it combats drug trafficking through international cooperation to deter and discourage drug traffickers.

4. Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971: The Convention establishes an international control system for psychotropic substances. It responded to the diversification and expansion of the spectrum of drugs of abuse and introduced controls over a number of synthetic drugs according to their abuse potential on the one hand and their therapeutic value on the other.

5. United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988: This Convention provides comprehensive measures against drug trafficking, including provisions against money laundering and the diversion of precursor chemicals. It provides for international cooperation through, for example, extradition of drug traffickers, controlled deliveries and transfer of proceedings.

6. International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism: The objective of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism is to enhance international cooperation among States in devising and adopting effective measures for the prevention of the financing of extremism, as well as for its suppression through the prosecution and punishment of its perpetrators.



Existing Conventions and Treaties

These conventions establish a global framework for addressing drug-related issues, regulating controlled substances, and promoting international cooperation in combating drug trafficking.

Important Definitions

- 1. DRUG:** In the context of international drug control, “drug” means any of the substances in Schedule I and II of the 1961 Convention, whether natural or synthetic. A term of varied usage. In medicine, it refers to any substance with the potential to prevent or cure disease or enhance physical or mental welfare; in pharmacology it means any chemical agent that alters the biochemical or physiological processes of tissues or organisms.
- 2. ILLICIT TRAFFIC:** The manufacture, cultivation or trafficking in drugs or psychotropic substances contrary to the provisions of the Conventions.
- 3. ILLICIT DRUG:** A drug that is legally available by medical prescription in the jurisdiction in question, or, sometimes, a drug legally available without medical prescription.
- 4. NARCOTIC DRUG:** In the context of international drug control, “narcotic drug” means any of the substances, natural or synthetic, in Schedules I and II of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961, and that Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol Amending the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961. In medicine, a chemical agent that induces stupor, coma or insensibility to pain (also called narcotic analgesic). The term usually refers to opiates or opioids, which are also named narcotic analgesics. In common parlance and legal usage, it is often used imprecisely to mean illicit drugs, irrespective of their pharmacology.
- 5. OVERDOSE:** The use of any drug in such an amount that acute adverse physical or mental effects are produced. Overdose may produce transient or lasting effects, or death; the lethal dose of a particular drug varies with the individual and with circumstances.
- 6. PHARMACEUTICAL DRUGS:** Drugs manufactured by the pharmaceutical industry or made up by a pharmacist. Industry terminology categorises drugs as ethical drugs, available only on prescription, and over-the-counter or



Important Definitions

proprietary drugs, advertised to the consumer and sold without prescription. The list of drugs requiring prescription varies considerably from country to country; most psychoactive pharmaceuticals are only available by prescription in industrialised countries.

7. PSYCHOTROPIC or PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCE: Any chemical agent affecting the mind or mental processes (i.e. any psychoactive drug). In the context of international drug control, “psychotropic substance” means any substance, natural or synthetic, or any natural material in Schedule I, II, III or IV of the 1971 Convention.

8. WITHDRAWAL SYNDROME: A group of symptoms of variable clustering and degree of severity which occur on cessation or reduction of use of a psychoactive substance that has been taken repeatedly, usually for a prolonged period and/or in high doses.

9. DRUG TRAFFICKING: Drug trafficking refers to the illegal transportation, distribution, and sale of drugs, including narcotics, stimulants, depressants, hallucinogens, and cannabis. It involves the production, processing, and movement of drugs across borders and is often associated with organised crime and violence. The UNODC defines drug trafficking as a serious crime that undermines the rule of law, undermines public health, and threatens the security and stability of societies.

10. OPIUM: Opium refers to the coagulated juice of the opium poppy, whereas “opium poppy” refers to the plant of the genus *Papaver somniferum* L., which thrives in many areas with temperate climates.

11. OPIATES: Opiates are naturally occurring alkaloids found in the opium poppy, including morphine, codeine, and thebaine. The phrase is frequently used interchangeably with opioids. Opioids, on the other hand, are synthetic chemicals that are derived from but not the same as opiates.



Important Definitions

12. OPIOIDS: Opioids refers to both opiates and their synthetic counterparts, which may be entirely or partially synthetic. Opioids are frequently utilised as anaesthetics during surgery, as well as relievers for both acute and chronic pain. Synthetic opioids come in a range of chemical forms, including methadone, buprenorphine, AH-7921, and various fentanyl derivatives, and can be very potent.

History of Opiates

Heroin, morphine, and other opiates trace their origins to a single plant, the opium poppy. Opium is obtained by slightly incising the seed capsules of the poppy after the plant's flower petals have fallen. The slit seedpods exude a milky latex that coagulates and changes colour, turning into a gumlike brown mass upon exposure to air. This raw opium may be ground into a powder, sold as lumps, cakes, or bricks, or treated further to obtain derivatives such as morphine, codeine, and heroin. Opium and the drugs obtained from it are called opiates.

Opium growth first began in about 3,400 B.C.; it was referred to as the "joy plant". As the power of opium was realised, demand for it grew. Many countries began to cultivate and process opium to increase availability and reduce costs. Its cultivation extended along the Silk Road, from the Mediterranean to Asia, and finally to China, where it sparked the Opium Wars in the mid-1800s. Opium was known as a strong pain reliever among ancient physicians. It was also used to induce sleep and relieve gastrointestinal symptoms. Opium was supposed to protect the user against poisoning and its pleasant effects were noted.

Heroin's long journey to drug traffickers starts with the cultivation of opium poppy seeds. Opium is generally grown by impoverished farmers on small plots in remote areas of the world. It flourishes in dry, warm climates, and the vast majority of opium poppies are grown in a small, 4,500-mile stretch of mountains covering central Asia from Turkey to Pakistan and Myanmar. Opium has recently been grown in Latin American countries, mainly Colombia and Mexico.

The Opium Wars in the mid-19th century were a critical juncture in modern Chinese history. To fund their ever-increasing demand for Chinese-produced tea, Britain began smuggling Indian opium to China through their control of the East India Company.



History of Opiates

The first Opium War was fought between China and Great Britain from 1839 to 1842. In the second Opium War, from 1856 to 1860, a weakened China fought both Great Britain and France. China lost both wars and had to cede the territory of Hong Kong to British control, open treaty ports to trade with foreigners, and grant special rights to foreigners operating within the treaty ports. In addition, the Chinese government had to stand by as the British increased their opium sales to people in China. The British did this in the name of free trade and without regard to the consequences for the Chinese government and Chinese people. As a result, China's addiction rate skyrocketed. The British sought to protect their lucrative opium trade, resulting in wars that significantly weakened China and forced it to open more ports to foreign trade and cede territory.

Opium dens were established as sites to buy and sell opium. They were common in China, Southeast Asia, the United States, and parts of Europe.

DERIVATIVES OF OPIATES

1. **Morphine:** In 1903, Morphine, the principal ingredient in opium, was extracted from opium resin. Morphine is the most commonly derived alkaloid from opium or poppy straw. Hailed as a miracle drug, it was widely prescribed by physicians in the mid-1800s.

2. **Heroin:** Heroin is a semi-synthetic opiate that is made from morphine, chemically known as diamorphine or diacetylmorphine. It has a strong potential for abuse and is about twice as powerful as morphine. Heroin was first synthesised from morphine in 1874, the Bayer Company of Germany introduced heroin for medical use in 1898. Physicians remained unaware of its addiction potential for years but by 1903, heroin misuse had risen to alarming levels in the United States. There have been reports of heroin production in four parts of the world: South America, Central America, Southeast Asia, and South-West Asia. Because of this, different names are given to the heroin at

History of Opiates

different phases of refining or purification, depending on how complicated the procedures are. The three major ways to use heroin are by injection, inhalation through the nose, and smoking.

3. Fentanyl: A group of synthetic opioids having narcotic analgesic effects that are short-acting and extremely powerful is known as fentanyls. Several types of fentanyls are made clandestinely. Due to their high potency, they are frequently sold in combination with heroin and can have severe effects on users. High rates of drug overdose among drug users are a result of the strong synthetic opioid fentanyl, which is revolutionizing the drug markets in North America. Nearly 90,000 overdose deaths in North America were related to opioids in 2021; most of these deaths included fentanyl produced illegally.

4. Methadone and Buprenorphine: Two long-acting synthetic opioid therapeutic medications that are frequently used for detoxification or maintenance therapy in cases of opioid dependence are buprenorphine and methadone. The WHO Model List of Essential Medicines include buprenorphine and methadone. They are used to treat dependence, such as opioid substitution therapy or HIV prevention in drug injectors.

5. AH-7921: Synthetic opioid AH-7921 has analgesic opioid-like characteristics and is typically equipotent to morphine. It was first created and researched as a pharmaceutical opioid analgesic medication, but it has not demonstrated any therapeutic uses and is not a licensed product.



Global Trafficking of Opiates

The illegal sale and distribution of controlled substances, like heroin and synthetic opioids, is known as drug trafficking. The production of opiates, which is commonly done in areas with lax law enforcement or under the influence of criminal organisations, is the first step in the intricate network that facilitates the trafficking of these substances. After creation, the opiates are moved via a variety of techniques, including crossing borders covertly and hiding in products that seem normal.

Traffickers use complex techniques to transfer their goods, utilising a number of middlemen to reduce the possibility of being discovered. The drugs are further processed and packaged at distribution hubs in preparation for street sale. This illegal commerce encourages related criminal activities like violence and organised crime, as well as addiction and overdose deaths.

With the help of international collaboration, interdiction initiatives, and intelligence collection, law enforcement authorities fight the trafficking of opiates nonstop. Even with these initiatives, it will be difficult to completely eradicate trafficking activities due to the drug trade's profitability. In addition, in order to effectively disrupt the activities of traffickers, law enforcement authorities must continually adapt and innovate in response to their continuously changing tactics.

REGIONS INVOLVED IN PRODUCTION OF OPIATES

Opium is a substance that is typically produced in third-world nations, primarily Afghanistan, Myanmar, and Colombia, but its users can be found all around the world. Trade channels are set up to satisfy these customers' needs. The Balkan, Northern, and Southern routes are the three main routes used to carry opiates from the producing nations to the western region of the world, connecting the rest of the world to the drug producing regions via smugglers.



Global Trafficking of Opiates

The Golden Triangle: This infamous region, encompassing parts of Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand, is a significant producer of opium. Decades of political instability and conflict have fueled poppy cultivation in this lawless area.

The Afghan Arc: Afghanistan, a country ravaged by war and instability, has become the world's leading producer of opium. Vast poppy fields and weak governance create a fertile ground for drug cultivation and trafficking.

Commonly Used Trade Routes:

Driven by the need for illegal substances, the global drug trade travels via a maze of interconnected pathways that weave over continents and a variety of landscapes. These channels serve as the main conduits for the transfer of drugs to markets worldwide, connecting the opium fields of Afghanistan, the covert laboratories of Latin America, and the smuggling routes of Southeast Asia. This complex web feeds a multi-trillion dollar industry that in turn feeds corruption, organised crime, and socioeconomic instability. We refer to this as "drug trade routes."



Global Trafficking of Opiates

A) THE BALKAN ROUTE

The Balkan route from Afghanistan runs through Iran, Turkey and the Balkan countries. It is the shortest and most direct route to the European consumer market. On this route, heroin usually enters the EU at land border points in Bulgaria or Greece. Iran is an important centre for heroin trafficking on the Balkan route, where large quantities of the drug are hidden in legitimate cargo and vehicles, before being exported to the EU via Turkey. Heroin is transported from here to the EU along three branches of the Balkan route:

1. Southern branch: by land through Greece and Albania or by sea through the Mediterranean.

2. Central branch: Through Bulgaria, North Macedonia and North Macedonia. To Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia and Italy or Austria mainly by land.

3. Northern branch: The road from Bulgaria to Romania and from there directly to the consumer markets of the central and western part of the EU. As the gateway to the EU, Bulgaria is a particularly important smuggling point. In addition to established EU entry points, heroin is increasingly transported by smuggling rings to Turkish ports in the Mediterranean, where ferries and cargo ships carry shipments to EU ports in Croatia, Italy and Slovenia.

In October 2021, Croatian police in the southern Adriatic port of Ploce seized 220 kilograms of heroin, which were hidden in the lead sheath cargo of a ship arriving in Turkey. The reasons for switching to illegal trade in maritime transport are the lower perceived risk and greater cost-effectiveness of this method of operation, especially for large shipments. Exploitation of existing domestic transportation infrastructure allows smugglers to transport larger quantities of heroin in one shipment than they previously could by moving smaller shipments and hiding them in vehicles on other land routes. This apparent recent shift in human trafficking also makes it more difficult to track and disrupt illicit heroin flows into the EU.



Global Trafficking of Opiates

B) THE SOUTHERN ROUTE

One of the main routes via which opiates, such as heroin and synthetic opioids, are smuggled from producing areas in Latin America, especially Colombia and Mexico, into the United States and other destination markets is known as the "Southern Route of Opiate Trafficking." This method usually starts with the manufacturing or cultivation of opiates in areas where criminal organisations are well-established and drug regulations are not strictly enforced.

The Netherlands remains a centre for consolidating and distributing heroin to the EU consumer market, including maritime transport along the southern route. Heroin can be sent to the EU through various routes, mainly through the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea, the Suez Canal, and the Mediterranean Sea. A number of large heroin seizures shipped in maritime containers, originating from ports in Iran and Pakistan and bound for the European market. Iran is still one of the main conduits for illegal drugs trafficking; namely opium, hashish, heroin and morphine base, which originate from Afghanistan and Pakistan, and are destined mainly for markets in Europe and the Persian Gulf and Middle East region.

One branch of this route mainly goes through the Arabian Peninsula, with free trade ports like the United Arab Emirates serving as transshipment points. Another branch goes from small ports on the Makran coast to African ports on the Swahili coast and South Africa, where heroin can be smuggled for domestic consumption or exported to the EU and other international markets. The United Arab Emirates has emerged as a hub for heroin shipments to Europe, potentially hiding the origin of the drugs. This well-established heroin trafficking route appears to be increasingly used to parallel trade methamphetamine to global markets, including the EU.



Global Trafficking of Opiates

C) THE NORTHERN ROUTE

The northern route has historically been used to smuggle heroin overland from the northern border of Afghanistan to Tajikistan and then north through Kyrgyzstan or Uzbekistan to Kazakhstan before reaching Russia. Heroin smuggled in this way is mainly destined for consumer markets in Central Asia, Belarus, Russia and Ukraine. Countries along the northern route have reported significant seizures of heroin, with Kyrgyzstan seizing 440 kilograms in 2021. This suggests that criminal networks operating along this route may be able to deliver large quantities of heroin to the consumer market in Russia and elsewhere. The heroin seized in Belarus, Romania and Ukraine in recent years is believed to originate from Central Asia and was destined for the Western European market.

D) MARITIME ROUTES

One important channel utilised by criminal organisations to move illegal substances, especially opiates, over international waterways is the maritime route of opiate trafficking. Opium is transported to coastal locations from production centres in places like Latin America, Southwest Asia, or Southeast Asia, where it is loaded onto a variety of marine vehicles, including big ships, smaller boats, and even submarines.

Once at sea, human traffickers use a variety of deception strategies to avoid being discovered. These strategies include using small, nimble boats for direct smuggling operations, secret compartments within ships, and advanced deception techniques within legal cargo shipments. Compared to overland routes, this strategy enables traffickers to carry enormous quantities of drugs over great distances with a lower danger of interception.

There is proof that significant amounts of heroin are being transported by sea from African nations into the European Union. A container carrying soap from Sierra Leone was found to contain 2.6 tons of heroin when it landed at the port



Global Trafficking of Opiates

of Rotterdam in May 2022. The use of mail and package services as well as airline passengers as drug couriers are additional methods by which heroin is transported from Africa to the EU.

The World Customs Organization's Western European Regional Intelligence Service states that from 2018 to 2021, South Africa continued to be the continent's top heroin distributor by mail or through drug couriers at airports, with Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Mozambique following suit. The UK market is the destination of a substantial volume of heroin that is shipped in big containers to EU ports, especially Rotterdam. The largest heroin market in Europe, the British market is estimated to be worth at least £4 billion a year.



Current Condition in Afghanistan

The production of opiates (opium, morphine, and heroin) is perhaps Afghanistan's largest illegal economic activity, supplying a significant portion of revenue to rural inhabitants. In some areas, opium poppy production accounted for a large fraction of the total agricultural area.

Opiates play a significant role in Afghanistan's economy and rural society, with many people, including farmers, relying on opium revenue for sustenance. From cultivation and production to local distribution and worldwide trading, all aspects of the drug supply chain provide financial rewards to individuals involved.

Recent reports show near-record levels of illicit coca and opium cultivation, although the drug ban in Afghanistan may have had an influence on the 2023 opium harvest, highlighting the need for alternative development efforts. Since the Taliban's takeover in August 2021, opium prices have increased due to the announcement of the cultivation ban in April 2022. Farmers' income from opium sales increased from USD 425 million in 2021 to USD 1.4 billion in 2022, accounting for 29% of the 2021 agricultural sector value. The figure still represents a small portion of the country's income from production and trafficking. Outside the country, ever-increasing funds accumulate along the illicit drug supply chain.

According to the 2023 UN report, poppy cultivation and opium production dramatically declined after the ban prohibiting "Poppy Cultivation and All types of Narcotics" was announced by the de-facto authorities (DfA) in April 2022. Opium poppy cultivation dramatically declined across all parts of the country and almost entirely in some provinces where opium poppy was illicitly cultivated for many years. A sharp and continued increase in opium prices and the absence of viable alternative sources of income may encourage some farmers to return to poppy cultivation despite the drug ban.



Current Condition in Afghanistan

Lack of licit economic opportunities and lack of access to markets have been identified in past research as some of the main drivers of illicit crop cultivation. Given reduced international aid, coupled with sanctions and restricted access to international payments systems, a limited number of opportunities for sustained economic recovery in the legal sphere remain in Afghanistan.

According to the 2023 UN report, poppy cultivation and opium production dramatically declined after the ban prohibiting “Poppy Cultivation and All types of Narcotics” was announced by the de-facto authorities (DfA) in April 2022. Opium poppy cultivation dramatically declined across all parts of the country and almost entirely in some provinces where opium poppy was illicitly cultivated for many years. A sharp and continued increase in opium prices and the absence of viable alternative sources of income may encourage some farmers to return to poppy cultivation despite the drug ban.

Lack of licit economic opportunities and lack of access to markets have been identified in past research as some of the main drivers of illicit crop cultivation. Given reduced international aid, coupled with sanctions and restricted access to international payments systems, a limited number of opportunities for sustained economic recovery in the legal sphere remain in Afghanistan.



Afghan Opiate Trade Project

“There are many dangers lurking in the shadows just off the bustling streets of the Afghan capital Kabul, but none is more threatening than the drug abuse crisis that is ravaging the city, and the entire country.”

In recent years Afghanistan has accounted for more than 80% of the global heroin production. The situation is intertwined with a number of other challenges facing the country, particularly issues relating to governance and security. The rule of law does not extend to all regions of the country because of the dominating presence of anti-government elements in many provinces, notably in the South of the country. This provides a conducive environment for opium production and for morphine and heroin processing and trafficking.

The Afghan open economy is best conceptualised as multiple industries producing various products for different markets. Afghan opium poppies are cultivated and processed to then be sold as opium, morphine and various grades of heroin. Each of these products have domestic and export markets and different regions within Afghanistan supply the drugs for different domestic and export markets.

Opiates produced in Afghanistan impact governance and economic development and continue to fuel insurgency, extremism, corruption and poor health, within Afghanistan, the southwest Asia region and further afield. The trafficking of illicit opiates contributes to the destabilisation of Afghanistan and countries along the main trafficking routes.

With serious repercussions for health, governance, and security at the national, regional, and global levels, the illicit Afghan opium trade has grown to be one of the biggest transnational drug and crime risks in history. Given the severity of the problem, UNODC and the international community have identified the analysis and monitoring of Afghan opiates as a priority.



Afghan Opiate Trade Project

The Afghan Opiate Trade Project aims to address the need for systematic, comprehensive and consolidated analytical information about trends in the global illicit Afghan opiate trade in order to support the international response to that issue. In addition to this, the project also aims to enhance the drug research capacity of those countries most affected by Afghan opiates, and increase the awareness of the data and information needed to support research on the opiate trade. The AOTP has produced a number of research reports relating to aspects of the illicit trade in Afghan opiates, and has also supported a number of countries in producing their own reports.

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. The importance of addressing the needs of affected communities, including through targeted interventions and support for drug users, their families, and communities.
2. The impact of drug trafficking on social and economic development, including issues such as public health, human rights, and organised crime.
3. The impact of Opiates on the consumers and methods to combat the threat it possesses.
4. The lack of financial stability across the globe resulting in trafficking and pressure to consume illegal substances.
5. The increased Involvement of Women and Children in Opiate Trafficking in recent times.
6. The contributions of technology development in facilitating easier transportation and access to illicit drugs.
7. The links Between Opiate Trafficking and Anti-Government Elements And how to resolve the issue.



Consequences Arising from Drug Trade of Opiates

Drug trafficking is a global problem that affects communities worldwide. It has significant social, economic, and health consequences and is a major contributor to drug addiction, drug-related crime, and violence. Drug trafficking also fuels corruption, undermines the rule of law, and threatens the stability and security of societies. It is estimated that drug trafficking generates billions of dollars in profits each year, making it a highly profitable criminal enterprise.

1. Violation of Human Rights.: One of the most prevalent problems lies in the transportation of drugs i.e. the trafficking itself is carried out by drug mules. These mules are usually children who have been abducted or sold to agents of the drug trafficking organisations by impoverished parents. The mules are subjected to various forms of torture in the form of smuggling the drugs cross-border. Other violations of rights include unlawful imprisonment, trial of minors as adults, and ill-treatment. There are also multiple instances of extrajudicial killings.

2. Extremism and Drug Trafficking: Drug trafficking is also carried out as a form of income acquisition by extremist organisations. Majority of certain extremists organisations' income from drug trade the money from drugs is used to fund extremist activities such as the purchase of firearms. Trafficking routes are used by criminal networks to transport other illicit products including firearms, uncut diamonds and live pangolins creating a convergence of crime.

3. Violence and Crime: Drugs increase the likelihood of many kinds of criminal activity. Drug-related crime occurs primarily in the form of trafficking-related activity, including violent conflicts among trafficking groups competing for increased market share.

4. Money Laundering: Money laundering is the process in which money acquired by illegal activity, "dirty money", is "laundered" to give money that



Consequences Arising from Drug Trade of Opiates

can be used in daily transactions, legally. The money produced through the trafficking of drugs is used to set up units that could be small businesses, that do not focus on making money, but instead on converting the illegal money into money that can be used for normal transactions. Hawala is an informal method of transferring money without any physical money actually moving. It is described as a "money transfer without money movement." This includes financial transfers by drug traffickers, migrant smugglers and other criminal actors and organisations, as well as safekeeping of funds obtained from illegal activity.

5. Environmental Impacts: Environmental damage related to illicit drugs is caused in producing countries by clearing of forests, growing of crops as monocultures, processing of harvested plants into drugs and the use of environmentally dangerous chemicals without the necessary precautions being taken. **6. Impact on Law Enforcement:** The impact of illicit drug abuse and trafficking on law enforcement is both extensive and intensive. Illicit drugs have a considerable impact at each step along the chain of production, distribution and consumption, diverting time, energy and resources away from other responsibilities.

The UNODC is responsible for leading the international community's efforts in combating drug trafficking. It provides support to governments and other organisations in developing and implementing policies and programs to combat drug trafficking. The World Customs Organisation, on the other hand, focuses on enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of customs administrations around the world. It works to improve customs procedures, information sharing, and law enforcement cooperation to prevent drug trafficking across borders. Finally, INTERPOL coordinates the efforts of national police organisations to combat international crime, including drug trafficking.



Consequences Arising from Drug Trade of Opiates

These organisations play a crucial role in supporting national efforts to combat drug trafficking by providing technical assistance, training, and funding. They also work to strengthen international legal frameworks, such as the UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, to ensure that countries have the necessary legal tools to combat drug trafficking.



Drug Cartels and Previous Drug Wars

Drug cartel, an illicit consortium of independent organizations formed to limit competition and control the production and distribution of illegal drugs. Drug cartels are extremely well-organized, well-financed, efficient, and ruthless. Since the 1980s, they have dominated the international narcotics trade.

These cartels operate sophisticated networks for the production, transportation, and distribution of opiates, including heroin and synthetic opioids like fentanyl. Their activities not only fuel addiction and contribute to public health crises but also perpetuate violence and corruption.

These cartels often control vast territories, using intimidation, bribery, and violence to maintain their dominance. They exploit poverty and lack of economic opportunities in their areas of operation, recruiting individuals into their ranks and perpetuating cycles of crime and instability.

1. Sinaloa Cartel: A Mexico-based cartel famous largely because their long-term leader, El Chapo, was recently captured and imprisoned, the dangerous Sinaloa Cartel is also notorious for its extensive ties to the Mexican federal police and military. Their organization has extensive reach across Central and South America, and is one of the leading drug exporters to the United States, primarily exporting heroin and cocaine.

2. Cártel de Jalisco Nueva Generación (CJNG): Emerging as one of Mexico's most powerful cartels in recent years, CJNG has rapidly expanded its influence across the country and internationally. Led by Nemesio Oseguera Cervantes, also known as "El Mencho," CJNG is heavily involved in the production and trafficking of heroin and synthetic opioids like fentanyl.

3. Tijuana Cartel: Operating primarily in the border city of Tijuana, this cartel has historically been a key player in the drug trade between Mexico and the United States. While it has faced internal conflicts and leadership changes over



Drug Cartels and Previous Drug Wars

the years, the Tijuana Cartel continues to be involved in trafficking opiates and other drugs.

4. Gulf Cartel: Based in northeastern Mexico, the Gulf Cartel has a long history of involvement in drug trafficking, including opiates. While it has weakened due to internal rifts and pressure from law enforcement, it still maintains a presence in the region and continues to engage in criminal activities.

5. Los Zetas: Originally formed as an enforcer group for the Gulf Cartel, Los Zetas later became an independent cartel known for its brutality and involvement in various criminal activities, including drug trafficking. While their influence has waned in recent years due to internal divisions and law enforcement actions, Los Zetas have been involved in trafficking opiates and other drugs.

Wars over drugs often refer to conflicts, both internal and international, fueled by the production, trafficking, and consumption of illicit drugs. These conflicts involve various factors, including governments, law enforcement agencies, drug cartels, and insurgent groups.

1. Mexico: The Mexican Drug War, which began in 2006, has resulted in intense violence and instability fueled by battles between rival drug cartels, as well as clashes between cartels and government security forces. Drug trafficking organizations, such as the Sinaloa Cartel, Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG), and others, have waged war over control of lucrative drug trafficking routes into the United States. The conflict has led to tens of thousands of deaths and widespread human rights abuses.

2. Central and South American Countries: Several countries in Central and South America, including Honduras, Guatemala, and Brazil, have experienced violence and instability related to drug trafficking. Drug cartels and organized



Drug Cartels and Previous Drug Wars

crime groups vie for control of trafficking routes and territories, leading to high levels of violence, corruption, and insecurity.

3. Thailand and Myanmar: Myanmar (formerly Burma) and Thailand share a border in the Golden Triangle region, a major hub for opium and methamphetamine production. Tensions have arisen between the two countries over drug trafficking, with accusations of cross-border smuggling and demands for greater cooperation in combating drug-related crimes. Efforts to address the issue have been complicated by political instability and ethnic conflicts in Myanmar.

4. Colombian Civil War (1964–2016): The conflict between the Colombian government, leftist guerrilla groups like the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and right-wing paramilitary organizations has been fueled in part by control over drug-producing regions and the drug trade. FARC, in particular, funded its insurgency through involvement in the cocaine trade, leading to clashes with government forces and other armed groups.

The War on Drugs has also been marked by its impact on human rights, contributing to mass incarceration, violence, and corruption in drug-producing and transit countries. These conflicts underscore the complex interplay between drug trafficking, organized crime, corruption, and political instability, highlighting the need for comprehensive strategies that address both the supply and demand sides of the illicit drug trade.



Cases Around the World

1. Authorities Join Forces to Combat Fentanyl Trafficking

Fentanyl is a lethal drug 50 times stronger than heroin, and 100 times more potent than morphine, which can kill an adult even with just a dose of 2 milligrams. It is a leading cause of fatalities and is available in different forms such as pills, powder, and liquid. Sometimes, it is also found mixed with other drugs, including heroin, counterfeit pills, methamphetamine and cocaine.

Fentanyl on its own is the key culprit in adolescent overdoses. Many adolescents accidentally take fentanyl when they ingest counterfeit pills that they believe are prescription opioids or stimulants, or other illicit drugs that are laced with the drug.

In 2022, apart from teens, at least 105,263 American adults died of drug overdoses, the majority of which involved synthetic opioids such as fentanyl and fentanyl analogues.

China is the primary manufacturer of the ingredients to make fentanyl, which often go to Mexican cartels that smuggle most of the fentanyl that reaches the United States across the southern U.S. border. There is little visibility into China's enforcement of its fentanyl regulations. But in the case of fentanyl and its precursor chemicals, small and middle-level Chinese actors in the chemical and pharmaceutical industries appear to be the key perpetrators of regulatory violations and source for Mexican criminal groups. They play an increasing role in laundering money for Mexican cartels, including the principal distributors of fentanyl to the United States — the Sinaloa Cartel and Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generación (CJNG). Chinese criminal networks include trade-based laundering.

In October 2023, it was pointed out that the global fentanyl supply chain often starts with chemical companies in China and the United States government focuses on breaking apart every link in that chain, getting fentanyl out of their communities. The United States Department of the Treasury is collaborating



Cases Around the World

with law enforcement to expose and disrupt a network responsible for the production and distribution of illicit drugs such as fentanyl.

Their Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has designated 28 individuals and entities involved in the international proliferation of illicit drugs, including a China-based network responsible for the production and distribution of tons of fentanyl, methamphetamine, and MDMA precursors. According to an executive order, the designations targeted 12 entities and 13 individuals based in China and two entities and one individual based in Canada. This action boosted the government's efforts to save lives by disrupting illicit fentanyl supply lines around the world.

2. Body Packing: Smuggling of Heroin Packets and Pellets Across Borders

Body packing is a common way to smuggle illicit drugs across borders or other security checkpoints using the human body as a vehicle. Drug mules usually swallow individual packets of drugs (usually cocaine or heroin) wrapped in waterproof material, or insert drugs within the gastrointestinal tract or other orifices. Detection of such drug packets has become difficult because of the constantly improving packaging techniques and the sophistication used by traffickers.

In the last few decades, there have been several cases of body packing heroin all over the world. Before 2009, there was a case of a 50-year-old woman who had ingested 50 pellets of packed heroin for transport. She had been detained by customs agents at an international airport because of a history of drug trafficking and brought to the emergency department by law enforcement. All her physical tests and blood test results were normal. However, her upright abdominal x-ray revealed rectangular intracolonic masses in her body. Another test revealed numerous pellets in her colon, with no obstruction or inflammation. Customs agents collected 49 intact pellets that each contained 12 grams of heroin. After repeated imaging confirmed decontamination, the patient was taken into federal custody on discharge.

Cases Around the World

There have also been various instances of paediatric body packing. One of which involves a 16-year-old boy who had presented symptoms consistent with opioid intoxication after arriving in the United States on a transcontinental flight. His mental status had improved after he received naloxone hydrochloride, and he subsequently confessed to body packing heroin. Then he was treated and he ultimately passed 53 packets of heroin, one of which had ruptured.

Another case showcases a teenage girl who was brought to the accident and emergency unit by airport officials after being found unconscious in her seat on a flight landing at Heathrow from Nigeria. She was hypothermic and her pupils were constricted bilaterally. An X-ray examination of her abdomen revealed multiple cylindrical opacities with body packing.

Intravenous naloxone had been administered to her and she improved immediately. However, she lapsed back into unconsciousness soon afterwards. A naloxone infusion was started and she was transferred to a tertiary unit where whole-bowel irrigation with polythene glycol was administered until all the bags were expelled. Body packing remains extremely rare in the paediatric age group. Drug toxicity owing to leaking or rupture of the packets and intestinal obstruction have been reported.

Imaging is essential in diagnosing body packing. In cases of severe opiate toxicity, patients are at increased risk of acute lung injury. Body packers can present in the emergency department as a result of ruptured drug packets or bowel obstruction. When illicit drugs are concealed intracorporeally by body packers, it exposes mules to the risk of life-threatening conditions such as drug overdose, toxicity from ruptured packets, and gastrointestinal obstruction.

3. Tramadol Usage in EMR (Eastern Mediterranean Region)

Tramadol is an opioid that is commonly prescribed to relieve moderate to



Cases Around the World

severe pain. The increasing prevalence of non-medical tramadol usage in the EMR (Eastern Mediterranean Region) is evident in the number of people receiving tramadol-related treatment and the number of tramadol overdose deaths reported in several countries, notably among youth. Various studies have concluded that tramadol's high levels of abuse are due to its easy availability in pharmacies (including without medication refills in some of these countries) and illicit markets, its low price compared to illicit drugs, users' perceptions that tramadol is safe because it is a prescription medication and its ease of concealment. Given that less than 10% of tramadol users have a medical source, various countries, including Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, have reported non-medical tramadol usage. Egyptian adolescents more commonly use tramadol than heroin. Tramadol use in the Iranian general population is estimated to be 4.9% among men and 0.8% among women. Tramadol is increasingly being placed under national control in most EMR countries, making it legally available only with a prescription. Such strict regulation is concerning because it may limit the medical use of tramadol, especially in nations where regulatory procedures make alternative opioids (opioid agonist therapies for opiate addiction) less available for medical use.



Current World Scenario

The world's heroin trade, driven mostly by Afghanistan's opium production, feeds a vast network of trafficking routes across continents, including the northern and Balkan routes, and transfers billions of dollars a year into Russia, Central Asia, and Western Europe. There has been an increase in the engagement of Afghan women. Beyond Afghanistan, areas such as Southeast Asia and Latin America—of which Myanmar and Colombia are important producers—contribute considerably to the heroin trade. The situation is further complicated by synthetic opioids like fentanyl, which are mainly smuggled across the US-Mexico border.

Effective global mitigation efforts to address this complex issue require all-encompassing methods that address supply and demand, including socioeconomic causes and the involvement of criminal networks.

Seizures combined with the world's current heroin consumption of 340 tons indicate a yearly flow of 430–450 tons of heroin into the world market. About 50 tons of that amount is created using opium from Myanmar and the Lao People's Democratic Republic; the remaining 380 tons are made entirely of morphine and heroin made from Afghan opium. The majority of the 375 tons that are not consumed or confiscated in Afghanistan are transported globally through routes that enter and pass through the nations that border Afghanistan.

The primary routes used by heroin traffickers to connect Afghanistan with the vast markets of the Russian Federation and Western Europe are the Balkan and Northern routes. The Balkan route, which has an annual market worth of almost \$20 billion, travels through the Islamic Republic of Iran (typically via Pakistan), Turkey, Greece, and Bulgaria before arriving to the Western European market. The Northern route to Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation primarily passes via Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. That market is thought to be worth \$13 billion annually.



Current World Scenario

Afghanistan has been the world's primary producer of illicit opium for almost 20 years. The production of opioids in Afghanistan has an effect on economic growth and governance. It also feeds extremism, corruption, conflict, and bad health in Afghanistan, southwest Asia, and beyond. Illegal opiate trafficking has a role in the destabilisation of Afghanistan and other nations along the main routes used for trafficking. Although opiate production in Afghanistan has been extensively studied, there are a few in-depth studies on the country's opiate manufacturing and trafficking processes, as well as none specifically examining the role played by women in these sectors.

UNODC's 2020 study found that Afghan women's involvement in the opiate trade increased from 2015 to 2020, with many male traffickers stating that women played multiple roles in the business, challenging the initial assumption that women had little to no role in the trade.

Fentanyl, a potent drug, is primarily smuggled across the US-Mexico border, with a median weight of 1.2 kilograms. China was the dominant source, but flow has decreased since 2019. Mexican drug cartels, the Sinaloa Cartel and Jalisco New Generation Cartel, manage most production networks, often relying on American citizens for smuggling. Between 2017 and 2021, 86% of fentanyl traffickers were American citizens.

Opium is mostly produced in Southeast Asia, with Myanmar being the main producer. The Golden Triangle is a significant opium-producing region that stretches across portions of Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar. In these countries, the opium is subsequently turned into heroin in covert laboratories.

Additionally, Afghanistan and Southwest Asia are major producers of opium. The majority of the nation's opium poppy crop is farmed in the southwest and south, and the poppy is subsequently turned into heroin in covert laboratories in Afghanistan and other nearby nations.



Current World Scenario

Colombia and Mexico in particular are major heroin producers in Latin America. The Andes is where most opium is grown, and these nations also house covert laboratories where heroin is processed. Although heroin is mostly produced in these regions, it is also produced in smaller amounts in other parts of the world, including the United States. Most of the heroin produced worldwide is shipped to China, Europe, Russia, Central Asia, and North America.

These resolutions should include policies that address the social determinants of drug abuse, increase public awareness campaigns, and increase access to preventive and treatment programs in order to decrease the demand for heroin. Delegates should also push for anti-corruption initiatives, international aid, and development assistance in order to address the underlying socio economic issues that motivate involvement in the heroin trade.

Through the promotion of agreement and collaboration, delegates can craft resolutions that provide all-encompassing answers to the many problems presented by the international heroin trade.

It is important for delegates to focus their attention on the Illicit trade in Afghanistan, and urgently consider the crimes that arise from the trade of narcotics.

The global opiate trade is a complex and interconnected issue with far-reaching implications. It drives illegal activities, inhibits development, and threatens health and security. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive strategy that addresses both supply and demand, promotes international cooperation, and prioritises evidence-based solutions.



Point for Discussion for Delegates

- 1. The importance of prevention and treatment strategies in addressing drug use and addiction, and the need for evidence-based approaches to drug policy.**
- 2. The role of international development and cooperation in addressing the root causes of drug trafficking, including poverty, inequality, and conflict.**
- 3. The role of transnational criminal organisations in drug trafficking, and their impact on national and international security.**
- 4. Discussion of the Afghan Opiate Trade Project initiative and its impact on combating drug trafficking and other drug related crimes.**
- 5. Future directions and opportunities for the resolution of the critical condition of drug trafficking worldwide.**
- 6. What could be used as means to identify and map illegal drug plantations in developing countries, which, sometimes, do not have the necessary technologies?**
- 7. How can the United Nations respond to the issue of illegal drug trafficking? How to protect children from drug trafficking and drug manufacturing?**
- 8. Initiatives taken on by countries with tier legal framework to target the following problems at each level.**
- 9. How are drug cartels across the globe impacting the current drug trends of opiates and how to combat such interventions?**



Note for Delegates

It is important for delegates of countries that are not direct connectors through the Afghan Trade Route to consider their country's contribution to global opiate trade, either as a producer or as a route for trafficking.

It is crucial for delegates to be well-versed with the agenda and have an accurate understanding of it.

It is advisable for each and every delegate to go through the study guide in order to attain a proper understanding of what is expected of them in the committee.

It is recommended to be well versed with the foreign policy of the respective countries and to have knowledge about the foreign policies pertaining to the agenda of other countries in order to initiate reasonable arguments.

Delegates from nations that are not directly connected to the Afghan Trade Route should also take into account how their nation contributes to the global opiate trade, either as a producer or as a conduit for trafficking.

As a committee, it is essential to work towards a common goal of combating drug abuse and dismantling organised criminal networks involved in smuggling and human trafficking while also addressing concerns and challenges raised by different countries and stakeholders.

Ultimately, it is up to the international community to work together to create a safer and more peaceful world for all. UNODC provides a unique platform for dialogue, discussion, and collaboration on this important topic.



References

- <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/about-unodc/index.html>
- <https://www.unodc.org/documents/terrorism/Publications/FAQ/English.pdf>
- <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/aotp.html>
- https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/AOTP/Drug_Stamp_Report_Online_1.pdf
- <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/unodc.org/unodc/en/corruption/unca.c.html>
- <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/intro/UNTOC.html>
- <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/drug-trafficking/index.html>
- https://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan/Opium_cultivation_Afghanistan_2022.pdf
- <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/aotp.html>
- <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/faqs.html#h14>
- https://www.unodc.org/documents/rpanc/Publications/other_publications/Balkan_route_web.pdf
- https://www.unodc.org/pdf/convention_1988_en.pdf
- <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/zh/organized-crime/module-16/key-issues/terrorism-and-drug-trafficking.html>
- https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/AOTP/AOTP_Voices_of_Quchaqbar_2020_web.pdf
- <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/aotp.html>
- <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/corruption/unca.c.html>
- https://www.unodc.org/documents/rpanc/Publications/other_publications/Balkan_route_web.pdf
- <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/sustainable-development-goals/index.html>
- <https://unis.unvienna.org/unis/en/pressrels/2023/unisnar1476.html#:~:text=KABUL%2FVIENNA%2C%2010%20September%20>