

## **THE INTERNATIONAL DRUG WAR**

Drug production, trafficking and consumption affects every country in the world. Despite forty years of US-led international drug control efforts that prioritize eradication of production, interdiction of traffic, and criminalization of consumption, overall drug production, trafficking and consumption have remained consistently steady.

Even in cases where eradication programs have lowered levels of production in one country, production is simply pushed into another country – this phenomenon is known as the “balloon effect”.

This was the case in the 1980s and 1990s with coca production in Peru, Colombia and Bolivia and with opium production in Burma and Afghanistan. The resilience of the global drug market has led to drug trafficking becoming the world’s primary revenue source for organized crime and the illicit drug industry now accounts for an estimated \$320 billion dollars annually.

Drug laws vary widely from country to country. Some nations embrace various elements of a harm reduction approach, in which drug laws are set and evaluated with the goal of reducing the harm of drugs and drug policies.

**Afghanistan** In Afghanistan, illicit opium production is so lucrative that establishment of a stable, non-corrupt central government is proving nearly impossible. International efforts to stop Afghan farmers from growing opium have fallen flat because the well-resourced Taliban can provide for farmers in a way the government cannot.

**Latin America** In Latin America, which has been brutalized for decades by the US-led drug war, momentum is currently building to explore less punitive measures that would reduce the economic, social and human costs of the war on drugs. Uruguay became the first country to legalize marijuana in December 2013.

Latin America is a crucial geographic zone for drug production and trafficking. The Andean countries of Colombia, Peru and Bolivia are the world’s main cocaine producers, while Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean have become the principal corridors for transporting drugs into the United States and Europe.

As a result, the countries of the region have suffered various consequences of drug trafficking and US-led eradication and interdiction efforts. In production countries, these include environmental and community damage from forced eradication of coca crops such as aerial spraying and the funding of guerrilla insurgent groups through illicit crop cultivation and sale, most notably, FARC in Colombia and the Shining Path in Peru.

Throughout the entire region, in both drug production and trafficking areas, there has been an upsurge of violence, corruption, impunity, erosion of rule of law, and human rights violations caused by the emergence of powerful organized crime groups and drug cartels.

Mexico’s drug war has turned incredibly violent in recent years, resulting in tens of thousands of deaths. Law enforcement attempts to put cartels out of business by arresting key figures have led not to the demise of the drug trade, but to bloody struggles for control. With prohibition propping up drug prices, it is inevitable that the drug trade will continue, no matter how risky or violent it gets.

Central America is now home to some of the world’s most dangerous cities, with the highest global homicide rate found in Honduras, at 82.1 murders per 100,000 inhabitants. The region has become unsafe for human rights defenders and journalists that expose the violence; for politicians and security officials that refuse to be corrupted by drug trafficking groups; and, most of all, for its citizens that get caught in crossfire between rivaling gangs. Increasingly, Latin American policymakers are speaking out against prohibition and are highlighting its devastating effects on the hemisphere. Uruguay became the first country to legalize marijuana in 2013. DPA is working to keep Latin American leaders, officials and civil society informed on drug policy issues, with the aim of ensuring that the dialogue on alternatives to the war on drugs continues in Europe/

Some nations are increasingly adopting less repressive policies including harm reduction approaches and decriminalization. Several countries in Europe are implementing varying degrees of decriminalization – with Portugal as the most notable example. In 2001, Portugal decriminalized the use of all drugs and the results have been encouraging. Drug addiction, overdoses and drug-related HIV transmission have decreased dramatically in Portugal, without a significant increase in drug use.

### **Global Reform Efforts**

The United States and the United Nations, both of which have a great deal of influence on international drug laws, maintain a criminal justice rather than health-oriented approach. They also continue to promote ineffective eradication and interdiction policies in countries where drugs are produced. This sets

the overall tone for global drug policy, so that the international community is locked into a model that promotes lucrative illicit markets dominated by organized crime.

As the international community grapples with these issues, solutions such as marijuana legalization to reduce the violence of Mexico's drug war, legal export of Afghan opium crops for medical use, and models that follow Portugal's drug laws become increasingly credible.

The Global Commission on Drug Policy includes Kofi Annan, Richard Branson, and the former presidents of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Poland, Portugal and Switzerland. They broke new ground with their initial report in 2011 by advancing and globalizing the debate over drug prohibition and its alternatives. Their subsequent report, released in September 2014, not only reiterates their demands for decriminalization, alternatives to incarceration, and greater emphasis on public health approaches – but also calls for responsible legal regulation of currently-illegal drugs.

Список використаних джерел

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3. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illegal\\_drug\\_trade\\_in\\_Latin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illegal_drug_trade_in_Latin_America)

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