

4) Within this model, we provide a simplified matrix, based on summaries of the international evidence, of policies and programmes that are more or less likely to be cost-effective in reducing drug-related crime [4].

Additionally, the National Drug Strategy Household Survey for 2018 found that Males were more likely than females to use illicit drugs (15.8% compared with 14.3%), and people aged 20–29 were more likely to use illicit drugs than those in any other age group (27%).

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Загоруйко Ю.,

курсант Національної академії внутрішніх справ

Консультант з мови: Романов І.І.

COMBATING ORGANIZED CRIME IN THE NORTHERN TRIANGLE REGION

Organized crime has become a serious concern for the entire global community. The era of globalization has transformed the world into a new social order characterized primarily by the unrestricted movement of goods and factors of production along national borders. The globalization of society and the advancements in transportation and communication technologies have provided various opportunities not only for the prosperity of our societies, but also for the criminal world as well.

Availing themselves of these advancements, organized crime syndicates have become a major challenge for the international community. It can even be said that organized crime has become among the top non-military threats to international security and stability since the end of the Cold War [1].

Organized crime reveal similar characteristics. Their infrastructures are highly sophisticated and easily adaptable to the trends of globalization. They maintain opportunistic temporary alliances and there is usually a strong link among the various types of organized crime such as terrorism, illicit trafficking in drugs and psychotropic substances, trafficking in human beings, firearms, radioactive materials and even weapons of mass destruction.

It should be mentioned that, organized crime in all its forms, possess a serious threat to the health, security and welfare of human beings, and adversely affects the economic, cultural and political foundations of society. It causes the erosion of the hard-earned benefits of development, the destabilization of the socio-economic order, the destruction of the moral and social state of society and undermines the quality of life of the peoples in the region.

Combating international organized crime is one of the major challenges for the international community. International organized crime forms part of a complex set of new security challenges. Although law enforcement is primarily the responsibility of sovereign nations, crime is becoming increasingly global. Thus, organized crime requires a coordinated international response and a close regional cooperation [3].

There are seven countries that make up Central America, the countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras which share many features and problems that make the borders between them seem non-existent. To this extent, these three countries are grouped together and known as the Northern Triangle region of Central America. As the countries that serve as the route to Mexico and the United States, the Northern Triangle countries are experiencing a growing number of security issues, which include the highest homicide rates worldwide, increasing drug trafficking, firearms and human trafficking, as well as illegal immigration.

The gangs and drug cartels that operate in the region have grown stronger over the past decades and prompted the leaders of the United States and the Northern Triangle countries to look for new and more efficient ways of combating organized crime in this region. The violence, instability, and insecurity caused by organized crime in the Northern Triangle have also led to large numbers of illegal immigrants at the US border.

The United States in reply to these issues, has already pledged \$1 billion dollars in aid to the Northern Triangle under the “Alliance for Prosperity of the Northern Triangle” framework. More than a year after the creation of this Alliance, the leaders of the Northern Triangle have proposed a new measure aimed at combating organized crime in the region.

The creation of a regional police unit can be a positive advancement in the fight against organized crime in the Northern Triangle, so long as certain precautionary measures are put in place in order to ensure the effectiveness of this police body.

Ultimately, these measures are needed in order to prevent human rights abuses, the spread of corruption, and in the worst case scenario, the unintentional creation of another transnational criminal organization in the region.

The creation of a regional police force must therefore take into account the corruption that plagues these justices and police systems as well as the history of human rights abuses still hunts El Salvador and Guatemala.

Summing up, an initiative to allow police to operate in the entire Northern Triangle territory can help effectively dismantle organized crime groups that already consider this territory as a borderless area where they carry out criminal activities. Nevertheless, more details on what this regional police force will look like are yet to be seen in order to provide a better assessment of its strengths and possible downfalls [2].

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