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International Narcotics Control Strategy Report

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Common Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Term
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
AFRICOM	U.S. Military Command for Africa
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATS	Amphetamine-Type Stimulants
CARICC	Central Asia Regional Information Coordination Center
CARSI	Central America Regional Security Initiative
CBP	U.S. Customs and Border Protection
CBSI	Caribbean Basin Security Initiative
DARE	Drug Abuse Resistance Education
DEA	U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
DOJ	U.S. Department of Justice
DTO	Drug Trafficking Organization
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FIU	Financial Intelligence Unit
ICE	U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
ILEA	International Law Enforcement Academy
INCB	International Narcotics Control Board
INCSR	International Narcotics Control Strategy Report

INL	U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs
JIATF-S	Joint Interagency Task Force South
JIATF-W	Joint Interagency Task Force West
MAOC-N	Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre-Narcotics
MLAT	Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NIDA	National Institute of Drug Abuse
OAS	Organization of American States
OAS/CICAD	Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission
ONDCP	Office of National Drug Control Policy
NPS	New Psychoactive Substances
SELEC	Southeast European Law Enforcement Center
SIU	Special Investigative Unit
SOUTHCOM	U.S Military Command for the Caribbean, Central and South America
TOC	Transnational Organized Crime
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNCAC	United Nations Convention against Corruption
UNTOC	United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USCG	U.S. Coast Guard
UTC	Universal Treatment Curriculum for Substance Use Disorders
WACSI	West Africa Cooperative Security Initiative
Ha	Hectare
HCL	Hydrochloride (cocaine)

Kg	Kilogram
MT	Metric Ton

International Agreements

- **1988 UN Drug Convention** – United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988)
- **UN Single Drug Convention** – United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol)
- **UN Psychotropic Substances Convention** – United Nations Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971)
- **UNCAC** – UN Convention against Corruption (2003)
- **UNTOC** – UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000) and its supplementing protocols:
- **Trafficking in Persons Protocol** – Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime
- **Migrant Smuggling Protocol** – Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Air and Sea, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime
- **Firearms Protocol** – Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

Parties to UN Conventions

Table 1: Parties to UN Conventions. *Dates ratified/acceded.*

As of 22 January 2024

Country	Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime	1988 UN Drug Convention	Convention Against Corruption
Afghanistan	24 September 2003	14 February 1992	25 August 2008
Albania	21 August 2002	27 June 2001	25 May 2006
Algeria	7 October 2002	9 May 1995	25 August 2004
Andorra	22 September 2011	23 July 1999	N/A
Angola	1 April 2013	26 October 2005	29 August 2006
Antigua and Barbuda	24 July 2002	5 April 1993	21 June 2006
Argentina	19 November 2002	28 June 1993	28 August 2006
Armenia	1 July 2003	13 September 1993	8 March 2007
Australia	27 May 2004	16 November 1992	7 December 2005
Austria	23 September 2004	11 July 1997	11 January 2006
Azerbaijan	30 October 2003	22 September 1993	1 November 2005
Bahamas	26 September 2008	30 January 1989	10 January 2008
Bahrain	7 June 2004	7 February 1990	5 October 2010
Bangladesh	13 July 2011	11 October 1990	27 February 2007
Barbados	11 November 2014	15 October 1992	10 October 2023
Belarus	25 June 2003	15 October 1990	17 February 2005
Belgium	11 August 2004	25 October 1995	25 September 2008

Belize	26 September 2003	24 July 1996	12 December 2016
Benin	30 August 2004	23 May 1997	14 October 2004
Bhutan	20 February 2023	27 August 1990	21 September 2016
Bolivia	10 October 2005	20 August 1990	5 December 2005
Bosnia and Herzegovina	24 April 2002	1 September 1993	26 October 2006
Botswana	29 August 2002	13 August 1996	27 June 2011
Brazil	29 January 2004	17 July 1991	15 June 2005
Brunei Darussalam	25 March 2008	12 November 1993	2 December 2008
Bulgaria	5 December 2001	24 September 1992	20 September 2006
Burkina Faso	15 May 2002	2 June 1992	10 October 2006
Burundi	24 May 2012	18 February 1993	10 March 2006
Cambodia	12 December 2005	7 July 2005	5 September 2007
Cameroon	6 February 2006	28 October 1991	6 February 2006
Canada	13 May 2002	05 July 1990	2 October 2007
Cape Verde	15 July 2004	8 May 1995	23 April 2008
Central African Republic	14 September 2004	15 October 2001	6 October 2006
Chad	18 August 2009	9 June 1995	26 June 2018
Chile	29 November 2004	13 March 1990	13 September 2006
China	23 September 2003	25 October 1989	13 January 2006
Colombia	4 August 2004	10 June 1994	27 October 2006
Comoros	25 September 2003	1 March 2000	11 October 2012
Congo	N/A	3 March 2004	13 July 2006

Cook Islands	4 March 2004	22 February 2005	17 October 2011
Costa Rica	24 July 2003	8 February 1991	21 March 2007
Cote d'Ivoire	25 October 2012	25 November 1991	25 October 2012
Croatia	24 January 2003	26 July 1993	24 April 2005
Cuba	9 February 2007	12 June 1996	9 February 2007
Cyprus	22 April 2003	25 May 1990	23 February 2009
Czech Republic	24 September 2013	30 December 1993	29 November 2013
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	17 June 2016	19 March 2007	N/A
Democratic Republic of the Congo	28 October 2005	28 October 2005	23 September 2010
Denmark	30 September 2003	19 December 1991	26 December 2006
Djibouti	20 April 2005	22 February 2001	20 April 2005
Dominica	17 May 2013	30 June 1993	28 May 2010
Dominican Republic	26 October 2006	21 September 1993	26 October 2006
Ecuador	17 September 2002	23 March 1990	15 September 2005
Egypt	5 March 2004	15 March 1991	25 February 2005
El Salvador	18 March 2004	21 May 1993	1 July 2004
Equatorial Guinea	7 February 2003		30 May 2018
Eritrea	25 September 2014	30 January 2002	N/A
Eswatini	24 September 2012	3 October 1995	24 September 2012

Estonia	10 February 2003	12 July 2000	12 April 2010
Ethiopia	23 July 2007	11 October 1994	26 November 2007
European Union	21 May 2004	31 December 1990	12 November 2008
Fiji	19 September 2017	25 March 1993	14 May 2008
Finland	10 February 2004	15 February 1994	20 June 2006
France	29 October 2002	31 December 1990	11 July 2005
Gabon	15 December 2004	10 July 2006	1 October 2007
Gambia	5 May 2003	23 April 1996	8 July 2015
Georgia	5 September 2006	8 January 1998	4 November 2008
Germany	14 June 2006	30 November 1993	12 November 2014
Ghana	21 August 2012	10 April 1990	27 June 2007
Greece	11 January 2011	28 January 1992	17 September 2008
Grenada	21 May 2004	10 December 1990	1 April 2015
Guatemala	25 September 2003	28 February 1991	3 November 2006
Guinea	9 November 2004	27 December 1990	29 May 2013
Guinea-Bissau	10 September 2007	27 October 1995	10 September 2007
Guyana	14 September 2004	19 March 1993	16 April 2008
Haiti	19 April 2011	18 September 1995	14 September 2009
Holy See	25 January 2012	25 January 2012	19 September 2016
Honduras	2 December 2003	11 December 1991	23 May 2005
Hungary	22 December 2006	15 November 1996	19 April 2005
Iceland	13 May 2010	2 September 1997	1 March 2011
India	5 May 2011	27 March 1990	9 May 2011
Indonesia	20 April 2009	23 February 1999	19 September 2006

Iran	N/A	7 December 1992	20 April 2009
Iraq	17 March 2008	22 July 1998	17 March 2008
Ireland	17 June 2010	3 September 1996	9 November 2011
Israel	27 December 2006	20 May 2002	4 February 2009
Italy	2 August 2006	31 December 1990	5 October 2009
Jamaica	29 September 2003	29 December 1995	5 March 2008
Japan	11 July 2017	12 June 1992	11 July 2017
Jordan	22 May 2009	16 April 1990	24 February 2005
Kazakhstan	31 July 2008	29 April 1997	18 June 2008
Kenya	16 June 2004	19 October 1992	9 December 2003
Korea, Republic of	5 November 2015	28 December 1998	27 March 2008
Kiribati	15 September 2005	N/A	27 September 2013
Kuwait	12 May 2006	3 November 2000	16 February 2007
Kyrgyz Republic	2 October 2003	7 October 1994	16 September 2005
Lao Peoples Democratic Republic	26 September 2003	1 October 2004	25 September 2009
Latvia	7 December 2001	24 February 1994	4 January 2006
Lebanon	5 October 2005	11 March 1996	22 April 2009
Lesotho	24 September 2003	28 March 1995	16 September 2005
Liberia	22 September 2004	16 September 2005	16 September 2005
Libya	18 June 2004	22 July 1996	7 June 2005
Liechtenstein	20 February 2008	9 March 2007	8 July 2010
Lithuania	9 May 2002	8 June 1998	21 December 2006

Luxembourg	12 May 2008	29 April 1992	6 November 2007
Macedonia, Former Yugoslav Rep.	12 January 2005	13 October 1993	13 April 2007
Madagascar	15 September 2005	12 March 1991	22 September 2004
Malawi	17 March 2005	12 October 1995	4 December 2007
Malaysia	24 September 2004	11 May 1993	24 September 2008
Maldives	4 February 2013	7 September 2000	22 March 2007
Mali	12 April 2002	31 October 1995	18 April 2008
Malta	24 September 2003	28 February 1996	11 April 2008
Marshall Islands	15 June 2011	5 November 2010	17 November 2011
Mauritania	22 July 2005	1 July 1993	25 October 2006
Mauritius	21 April 2003	6 March 2001	15 December 2004
Mexico	4 March 2003	11 April 1990	20 July 2004
Micronesia, Federal States of	24 May 2004	6 July 2004	21 March 2012
Moldova	16 September 2005	15 February 1995	1 October 2007
Monaco	5 June 2001	23 April 1991	
Mongolia	27 June 2008	25 June 2003	11 January 2006
Montenegro	23 October 2006	23 October 2006	23 October 2006
Morocco	19 September 2002	28 October 1992	9 May 2007
Mozambique	20 September 2006	8 June 1998	9 April 2008
Myanmar (Burma)	30 March 2004	11 June 1991	20 December 2012
Namibia	16 August 2002	6 March 2009	3 August 2004

Nauru	12 July 2012	12 July 2012	12 July 2012
Nepal	23 December 2011	24 July 1991	31 March 2011
Netherlands	26 May 2004	8 September 1993	31 October 2006
New Zealand	19 July 2002	16 December 1998	1 December 2015
Nicaragua	9 September 2002	4 May 1990	15 February 2006
Niger	30 September 2004	10 November 1992	11 August 2008
Nigeria	28 June 2001	1 November 1989	14 December 2004
Niue	16 July 2012	16 July 2012	3 October 2017
Norway	23 September 2003	14 November 1994	29 June 2006
Oman	13 May 2005	15 March 1991	9 January 2014
Pakistan	13 January 2010	25 October 1991	31 August 2007
Palau	13 May 2019	14 August 2019	24 March 2009
Panama	18 August 2004	13 January 1994	23 September 2005
Papua New Guinea			16 July 2007
Paraguay	22 September 2004	23 August 1990	1 June 2005
Peru	23 January 2002	16 January 1992	16 November 2004
Philippines	28 May 2002	7 June 1996	8 November 2006
Poland	12 November 2001	26 May 1994	15 September 2006
Portugal	10 May 2004	3 December 1991	28 September 2007
Qatar	10 March 2008	4 May 1990	30 January 2007
Romania	4 December 2002	21 January 1993	2 November 2004
Russia	26 May 2004	17 December 1990	9 May 2006
Rwanda	26 September 2003	13 May 2002	4 October 2006

St. Kitts and Nevis	21 May 2004	19 April 1995	N/A
St. Lucia	16 July 2013	21 August 1995	25 November 2011
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	29 October 2010	17 May 1994	N/A
Samoa	17 December 2014	19 August 2005	18 April 2018
San Marino	20 July 2010	10 October 2000	
Sao Tome and Principe	12 April 2006	20 June 1996	12 April 2006
Saudi Arabia	18 January 2005	9 January 1992	29 April 2013
Senegal	27 September 2003	27 November 1989	16 November 2005
Serbia	6 September 2001	12 March 2001	20 December 2005
Seychelles	22 April 2003	27 February 1992	16 March 2006
Sierra Leone	12 August 2014	6 June 1994	30 September 2004
Singapore	28 August 2007	23 October 1997	6 November 2009
Slovakia	3 December 2003	28 May 1993	1 June 2006
Slovenia	21 May 2004	6 July 1992	1 April 2008
Solomon Islands	N/A	N/A	6 January 2012
Somalia	N/A	N/A	11 August 2021
South Africa	20 February 2004	14 December 1998	22 November 2004
South Sudan	N/A	20 October 2023	23 January 2015
Spain	1 March 2002	13 August 1990	19 June 2006
Sri Lanka	22 September 2006	6 June 1991	31 March 2004
Sudan	10 December 2004	19 November 1993	5 September 2014

Suriname	25 May 2007	28 October 1992	18 November 2021
Sweden	30 April 2004	22 July 1991	25 September 2007
Switzerland	27 October 2006	14 September 2005	24 September 2009
Syria	8 April 2009	3 September 1991	N/A
Tajikistan	8 July 2002	6 May 1996	25 September 2006
Thailand	17 October 2013	3 May 2002	1 March 2011
Tanzania	24 May 2006	17 April 1996	25 May 2005
Timor-Leste	9 November 2009	3 June 2014	27 March 2009
Togo	2 July 2004	1 August 1990	6 July 2005
Tonga	3 October 2014	29 April 1996	6 February 2020
Trinidad and Tobago	6 November 2007	17 February 1995	31 May 2006
Tunisia	19 July 2003	20 September 1990	23 September 2008
Turkey	25 March 2003	2 April 1996	9 November 2006
Turkmenistan	28 March 2005	21 February 1996	28 March 2005
Tuvalu	N/A	N/A	4 September 2015
UAE	7 May 2007	12 April 1990	22 February 2006
Uganda	9 March 2005	20 August 1990	9 September 2004
Ukraine	21 May 2004	28 August 1991	2 December 2009
United Kingdom	9 February 2006	28 June 1991	9 February 2006
United States	3 November 2005	20 February 1990	30 October 2006
Uruguay	4 March 2005	10 March 1995	10 January 2007
Uzbekistan	9 December 2003	24 August 1995	29 July 2008
Vanuatu	4 January 2006	26 January 2006	12 July 2011

Venezuela	13 May 2002	16 July 1991	2 February 2009
Vietnam	8 June 2012	4 November 1997	19 August 2009
Yemen	8 February 2010	25 March 1996	7 November 2005
Zambia	24 April 2005	28 May 1993	7 December 2007
Zimbabwe	12 December 2007	30 July 1993	8 March 2007

**Not included on this list is the “State of Palestine,” which, according to the United Nations, has purportedly acceded to the UN Convention against Corruption (2014), to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2015), and to the 1988 UN Drug Convention (December 29, 2017). The Government of the United States of America notified the United Nations, in its capacity as depositary for these Conventions, that it does not believe the “State of Palestine” qualifies as a sovereign state and does not recognize it as such. Therefore, the Government of the United States of America believes that the “State of Palestine” is not qualified to accede to the Conventions and does not believe that it is in a treaty relationship with the “State of Palestine” under the Conventions.*

Introduction

Overview

The United States took decisive action in 2023 to confront the global threat of illicit drugs, including the launch of the Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats in July; hosting the inaugural meeting of the Trilateral Fentanyl Committee with Canada and Mexico in April; and resuming cooperation with the People's Republic of China (PRC) to reduce the flow of precursor chemicals and equipment used in illicit fentanyl production. These and other actions responded to enormous and growing global concern over drug overdose deaths and drug-fueled crime. While much more remains to be done, these positive steps reflect a renewed and forceful international commitment to address the shared challenge and crushing human toll of illicit drugs.

According to provisional data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, there were nearly 110,000 drug overdose deaths in the United States in 2022, many caused by illicitly manufactured synthetic drugs like fentanyl. After years of large increases in overdose deaths and a record number during the pandemic, this figure was largely unchanged from the prior year – a welcome trend, but still a tragedy.

The illicit drug trade not only harms persons with substance use disorders but also fuels other illegal activities, with incalculable costs to public health, the economy, the environment, rule of law, and national security. Synthetic drugs pose an especially grave threat. They are cheap and easy to produce with widely available chemicals and equipment; are much more potent and lethal even in small amounts than plant-based drugs; and result in enormous profits to traffickers. While fentanyl is the most prominent and dangerous synthetic drug in North America, the synthetics threat is also rapidly evolving, with new analogues emerging and dangerous cutting agents such as xylazine being added to the drug supply. This shared threat imperils all regions of the world, thus requires a coordinated international response.

To address these challenges, the United States launched the Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats in July 2023. A time-bound effort, it is intended to galvanize action and achieve results to accelerate the global response to deadly synthetic drug threats. As of January 1, 2024, 144 countries are participating, with representatives from ministries of foreign affairs, health, justice, public security, interior, and trade, among others.

International organizations are also participating, and mechanisms will be developed for participation by civil society and the private sector.

The Coalition's three Working Groups are: 1) preventing the illicit manufacture and trafficking of synthetic drugs; 2) detecting emerging drug threats and use patterns; and 3) promoting public health interventions and services to prevent and reduce drug use, overdose, and other related harms. Seven technical, action-oriented sub-working groups focus on key issues under each rubric. They have met monthly since October 2023 to share expertise and best practices, identify opportunities for peer learning and assistance, and trigger national and joint action to combat synthetic drugs. In the first half of 2024, Coalition participants will aim to translate this into direct action appropriate for their national circumstances. Participating countries may introduce new policies, practices, and legislation, enter into commitments domestically or with each other, engage with the private sector and civil society, and/or develop national action plans. Participants could also join programs offered by international organizations and other partners to increase their own capacity, "twin" with other countries for peer support, or contribute to capacity building programs.

During the North American Leaders Summit in January 2023, the heads of state of the United States, Canada, and Mexico directed the formation of the Trilateral Fentanyl Committee to address the threat facing North America from synthetic opioids, particularly fentanyl. The three countries prioritized four areas for coordination: 1) current and emerging synthetic drugs; 2) drug demand and public health; 3) drug trafficking modes and methods; and 4) illicit finance. They have committed to work together to disrupt the global transfer, facilitation, and supply of illicit fentanyl, precursor chemicals, and the equipment (such as pill presses) used in the production of illicit drugs or precursors before they reach the Western Hemisphere. The Trilateral Committee pledged to mobilize other countries impacted by synthetic drugs, including methamphetamine, captagon, and tramadol in addition to fentanyl; to establish a practical mechanism to share information on emerging drug trafficking trends; and to create an expert working group to strengthen legislative and regulatory frameworks on precursor chemicals. The Committee, which will coordinate its work with that of the Global Coalition, met three times in 2023 and will next meet in Mexico in early 2024.

In November, the United States and the People's Republic of China (PRC) announced the resumption of bilateral cooperation on counterdrug efforts to reduce the flow of precursor chemicals that have contributed directly to the opioid crisis in the United States. The PRC is now taking concrete law enforcement action against illicit precursor suppliers and has issued a notice to industry warning Chinese companies against illicit trade in precursor chemicals and pill press equipment. Together, the United States and the PRC are working to launch a counternarcotics working group to ensure sustained follow-through with ongoing law enforcement coordination on counternarcotics issues. While it will take sustained implementation and coordination by the United States, the PRC, and third countries in the supply chain to significantly disrupt the trafficking of precursor chemicals and equipment for illicit drug production, there is real potential for meaningful action.

The United States will also continue to engage in other robust international partnerships on counterdrug efforts. In December 2023, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted by consensus a U.S.-tabled resolution on the public health and security threats posed by synthetic drugs, highlighting international political will to address this priority. In March 2024, the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) will undertake a mid-term review to take stock of previous drug control policy commitments and set a path forward for the next five years. It will also consider recommendations by the World Health Organization and International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) to place 24 substances under international control, including two fentanyl precursor chemicals (4-piperidone and 1-boc-4-piperidone) that the United States requested be reviewed for control under the 1988 UN Drug Convention. In December 2023, the INCB recommended that both substances be placed under international control. Additionally, the INCB initiated a review in 2023 of esters (compounds) of precursor chemicals simultaneously with the review of the chemicals themselves for the first time, directly responding to a recommendation of the CND in a U.S.-sponsored resolution on non-scheduled chemicals and designer precursors.

The United States continued its support to technical assistance resources such as the UN Toolkit on Synthetic Drugs, which brings together over 350 multidisciplinary resources from across the UN system to help implement comprehensive solutions to the synthetic drug threat. It is available in all six official UN languages and in 2023 had over 55,000 registered users from 203 countries. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) added to the Toolkit a new module on air trafficking funded by the United States and developed in partnership with the International Civil Aviation Organization. With the majority of synthetic

drugs trafficked by air, the module supports aviation experts and law enforcement to prevent and detect synthetic drug trafficking in commercial passenger, cargo, and general aviation environments. It also provides guidance on aviation-related post-detection and seizure investigations.

The United States also continued to leverage sanctions and its Narcotics and Transnational Organized Crime Rewards Programs to disrupt the illicit synthetic drug trade, designating 150 individuals and entities since 2021 for enabling the fentanyl supply chain, thereby cutting off transnational criminals from the U.S. financial system. Relatedly, the United States uses the Narcotics and Transnational Organized Crime Rewards Programs to support law enforcement efforts to bring transnational traffickers to justice.

In addition, the United States took steps in 2023 to expand access to public health services and remove barriers to treatment for substance use disorder. The President's National Drug Control Strategy outlines a whole of government approach encompassing harm reduction, reducing the demand for drugs, and providing treatment to those suffering from substance use disorders to meet people where they are. As one example, the Food and Drug Administration expanded access to life-saving overdose reversal medication by approving the first over-the-counter naloxone nasal spray. Reducing the supply of drugs and dismantling organized criminal groups of course also remain essential aspects of a mutually reinforcing strategy.

Broader regional trends in drug production and trafficking, including in the Western Hemisphere, remained largely unchanged in 2023 but overall did not worsen. Mexico remains the source of most methamphetamine and heroin seized in the United States, a key transit point for cocaine from South America, and once again the sole significant source of illicit fentanyl and fentanyl analogues significantly affecting the United States. Drug production and trafficking from Mexico to the United States continues to fuel crime and violence on both sides of the border. The United States will continue to partner with Mexico under the U.S.-Mexico Bicentennial Framework for Security, Public Health, and Safe Communities, adopted in 2021, to strengthen bilateral cooperation to address illicit drug production and trafficking, including through a joint synthetic drug action plan to improve regulatory coordination, information sharing, and training to reduce fentanyl production and precursor chemical diversion. And, as noted above, the newly formed Trilateral Fentanyl

Committee now constitutes the overarching high-level context for broader North American cooperation.

Colombia remains a regional leader in drug interdiction and one of the most committed U.S. counterdrug partners. The U.S.-Colombia holistic counternarcotics strategy continues to focus on supply reduction, rural security and development, and countering environmental crimes. However, Colombia is also the long-standing top source country of cocaine destined for the United States, with coca cultivation in 2023 at an all-time high. Its new national drug policy, balancing rural development and counterdrug programs to address security and governance in rural areas, aims to shift substantial numbers of small-scale coca-growing families to licit alternatives by 2026, thereby significantly reducing coca cultivation. While a laudable goal, Colombia will need to overcome severe budget limitations and improve coordination mechanisms to accomplish it.

Political upheaval in Peru (the world's second largest cocaine producer) and Ecuador hindered government counterdrug efforts. In Peru, while counterdrug cooperation with the United States remained largely positive, unrest following the December 2022 impeachment of former president Pedro Castillo led to inconsistencies and delays in implementing counterdrug policies. Ecuador continued to demonstrate strong government will in combating drug trafficking. However, the August murder of presidential candidate Fernando Villavicencio – who strongly spoke out against drug trafficking, organized crime, and corruption – served to heighten the public's already skyrocketing concerns over rising drug-fueled crime and a record homicide rate.

One region that did see a potentially significant shift – which bears close monitoring going forward – was Central Asia. An estimated 85 to 95 percent reduction in opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan resulted in its removal from the list of countries determined by the United States to have failed demonstrably to adhere to its obligations under international drug control agreements. That reduction was followed by increased trafficking in other parts of Central Asia, although its extent is not clear. Burma is now the world's largest opium poppy cultivator, and a significant producer of and transit country for methamphetamine – an especially challenging state of affairs in view of the presence of political unrest following the 2021 military coup, well-armed criminal organizations, and proximity to the huge chemical and pharmaceutical industries in India and the PRC. The United States once

again determined that Burma, together with Bolivia and Venezuela, failed demonstrably to adhere to their obligations under international drug control agreements.

Despite the positive progress in 2023, the risks to health and security from the illicit drug trade and its attendant crime cannot be overstated. The United States will continue to lead efforts to confront them, together with increasing numbers of committed partners. Almost all countries of the world have now come together to develop mutually reinforcing actions to reduce this threat, and while additional progress will require the international community to remain vigilant, the potential remains high for the momentum seen in 2023 to continue.

Legislative Basis for the INCSR

The Department of State's 2024 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR) is one of several annual reports on foreign policy and foreign assistance that the United States Congress has mandated and one of the Department's principal public reports on international narcotics control issues. Its two volumes are Volume I, Drugs and Chemical Control, and Volume II, Money Laundering. It also includes reporting requirements established by the Combat Methamphetamine Enforcement Act (CMEA), and the National Defense Authorization Acts (NDAA) for Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023, as described below. This report, released in March 2024, covers calendar year 2023.

A number of statutory provisions provide reporting requirements for the INCSR. The broad requirements are set forth in section 489 of the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961, as amended (22 U.S.C. § 2291) which requires, among other things, reporting on countries designated by the President as major illicit drug producing or drug transit countries (the "Majors List") and those that have received foreign assistance under Sec. 489. Sections 481(d)(2) and 484(c) of the FAA and section 804 of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended, set forth additional matters to be addressed in the report on a range of narcotics control issues.

The Majors List:

The INCSR serves as one of the factual bases for the designations in the President's annual report to Congress of the major drug transit or major illicit drug-producing countries. This requirement of a "Majors List" was initially included in section 591 of the Kenneth M. Ludden Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act,

2002 (P.L. 107-115). It was made permanent by section 706 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2003 (P.L. 107-228). That section requires that the President submit an annual report no later than September 15 of each year that identifies each country determined by the President to be a major drug transit country or major illicit drug-producing country.

The Majors List must identify any country on the list that has "failed demonstrably . . . to make substantial efforts" during the previous 12 months to adhere to international counternarcotics agreements and to take certain counternarcotics measures set forth in U.S. law. U.S. assistance under the current foreign operations appropriations act may not be provided to any country designated as having "failed demonstrably" unless the President determines that the provision of such assistance is vital to U.S. national interests or that the country, at any time after the President's initial report to Congress, has made "substantial efforts" to comply with the counternarcotics conditions in the legislation. This prohibition does not affect humanitarian, counternarcotics, and certain other types of assistance that are authorized to be provided notwithstanding any other provision of law.

Precursor Chemicals:

Congress expanded the requirements of the INCSR in 2007 to include reporting on the five countries that export the largest amounts of methamphetamine precursor chemicals and the five countries importing the largest amounts of these chemicals. This requirement was set forth in the Combat Methamphetamine Enforcement Act (CMEA) (the USA Patriot Improvement and Reauthorization Act 2005, Title VII, P.L. 109-177), amending sections 489 and 490 of the FAA (22 USC 2291h and 2291), sec. 722. This reporting includes efforts to control methamphetamine precursor chemicals and estimates of legitimate demand for them, prepared by most parties to the 1988 UN Drug Convention (Drug Convention) and submitted to the International Narcotics Control Board. The CMEA requires a Presidential determination by March 1 of each year on whether the five countries that legally exported and the five countries that legally imported the largest amount of precursor chemicals (under FAA sec. 490) have cooperated with the United States to prevent these substances from being used to produce methamphetamine or have taken adequate steps on their own to achieve full compliance with the 1988 UN Drug Control Convention. This determination may be exercised by the Secretary of State pursuant to Executive Order 12163 and by the Deputy Secretary of State pursuant to State Department Delegation of Authority 245-2.

FAA and UN Drug Convention:

The FAA requires a report on the extent to which each country or entity that received assistance under chapter 8 of Part I of the FAA in the past two fiscal years has "met the goals and objectives of the United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances ('Drug Convention')." Although the Drug Convention does not list specific goals and objectives, it does set forth a number of obligations that the parties agree to undertake. Generally speaking, it requires the parties to take legal measures to outlaw and punish all forms of illicit drug production, trafficking, and drug money laundering; to control chemicals that can be used to process illicit drugs; and to cooperate in international efforts to these ends. The relevant statute (FAA sec. 489) specifies actions by foreign countries on the following issues as relevant to evaluating performance under the UN Drug Convention: illicit cultivation, production, distribution, sale, transport and financing, and money laundering, asset seizure, extradition, mutual legal assistance, law enforcement and transit cooperation, precursor chemical control, and demand reduction.

In attempting to evaluate whether countries and certain entities are meeting the goals and objectives of the Drug Convention, the Department has used the best information it has available. The 2024 INCSR covers countries that range from major drug producing and drug-transit countries, where drug control is a critical element of national policy, to small countries or governments where drug-related issues or the capacity to deal with them are minimal. As a result, the reports vary in the extent of their coverage. Comprehensive reports are provided for significant drug-control countries for which considerable information is available. Where only limited information is available for smaller countries or governments, reports may be less comprehensive. The Department invites and frequently receives submission of relevant information from the governments of foreign jurisdictions themselves, for potential inclusion after evaluation and analysis by the Department.

The country chapters report upon actions taken – including plans, programs, and, where applicable, timetables – toward fulfillment of Drug Convention obligations. Reports often include discussion of foreign legal and regulatory structures. However, while the Department strives to provide accurate information, this report should not be used as the basis for determining legal rights or obligations under U.S. or foreign law.

Some jurisdictions are not yet parties to the Drug Convention; some do not have status in the United Nations and cannot become parties. The Department has nonetheless considered actions taken by these jurisdictions in areas covered by the Convention as well as plans (if any) for becoming parties and for aligning their legislation with the Convention's requirements. Other countries have taken reservations, declarations, or understandings to the Convention or other relevant treaties; these are generally not detailed in this report. For some of the smallest countries or entities that have not been designated by the President as major illicit drug producing or major drug-transit countries, the Department has insufficient information to make a judgment as to whether the goals and objectives of the Convention are being met.

Unless otherwise noted in the relevant country chapters, the Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) considers all countries and other entities with which the United States has bilateral narcotics agreements to be meeting the goals and objectives of those agreements.

Information concerning counternarcotics assistance is provided, pursuant to section 489(b) of the FAA, in the section entitled "U.S. Government Assistance."

Fentanyl and Law Enforcement Units (New in 2023):

The President signed the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2022, Public Law 117-81, into law on December 27, 2021, with additional reporting requirements for the INCSR. Section 5102 provides for a "separate section that contains an identification of all United States Government-supported units funded by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs and any Bureau-funded operations by such units in which United States law enforcement personnel have been physically present."

Section 6610 of the FY23 NDAA requires the INCSR to identify, to the extent feasible, the countries that are the most significant sources of illicit fentanyl and fentanyl analogues significantly affecting the United States during the preceding calendar year. This reporting must include (in summary), whether each of these countries cooperated with the United States to prevent export of fentanyl and its analogues to the United States; has and uses scheduling or other procedures for illicit drugs similar to the procedures under U.S. law set forth in 21 U.S.C. 811 et seq.; is taking steps to prosecute individuals involved in the illicit

manufacture or distribution of controlled substance analogues as defined under specified U.S. law; and requires registration of tableting and encapsulating machines or other measures similar in effect to those set forth in specified U.S. regulations and has not made good faith efforts to improve regulation of such machines.

Fentanyl Results Act (New in 2024):

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2023 was signed into law on December 6, 2022; sections 5551 – 5558 comprise the Fentanyl Results Act. Section 5555 provides for additional reporting in the INCSR on synthetic drugs and New Psychoactive Substances (NPS). It requires (in summary) reporting on countries significantly involved in the manufacture, production, transshipment, or trafficking of covered synthetic drugs, as defined in the Act, to include (to the extent possible to determine) the scale of production, law enforcement assessment of lab capacity, methods of synthesis, and the country's policies to regulate licit manufacture and interdict illicit manufacture. It further requires, with respect to governments' responses to NPS, to report to the extent practicable on governments which have articulated policies on scheduling NPS and the impacts of those policies.

Demand Reduction

Drug demand reduction (DDR), which focuses on drug use prevention, treatment, and recovery support services, is a foreign policy tool for addressing the interconnected threats of drugs, crime, and violence. Access to effective prevention, treatment, and recovery programs reduces global demand for drugs, disrupts markets that facilitate the proliferation of transnational organized crime, and reduces associated instability and violence. DDR programs also assist drug supply reduction efforts in bringing countries together to collect, analyze, and share consumption data to inform policy and programs that are potential indicators to increase recovery success and inhibit consumption frequency.

Effective demand reduction efforts promote a comprehensive, balanced approach to substance use disorders. The INL bureau works closely with international partners to develop and execute capacity building activities, including training, for service providers in drug prevention, treatment, and recovery support professions.

Substance use disorder is a major public health threat. Drug use is a preventable and treatable disease, and the global drug trade threatens country stability. Many countries are requesting U.S.-supported technical assistance to improve and develop effective policies aimed at reducing drug use and its consequences. The INL drug demand reduction program has three strategic components: (1) promote the adoption of recovery-oriented and evidence-based drug policies and internationally recognized standards, (2) support drug data collection and conduct analysis to assure the quality of drug treatment services, and (3) implement programs that effectively prevent and reduce drug use disorders. To achieve these objectives, INL supports the following:

- Development of professional networks of drug prevention, treatment and recovery experts, educators, and practitioners by providing training, mentoring, and credentialing based on evidence-based practices;
- Development of drug-free community coalitions internationally, involving law enforcement and public/private social institutions, aimed at preventing drug use and its consequences;
- Research, development, and outcome-based evaluation efforts to determine the effectiveness of drug prevention and treatment programs.

Significant completed and ongoing INL-funded demand reduction projects for 2023 included:

Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats:

Following the successful launch of the Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats by the United States in July 2023, the coalition established three working groups and seven sub-working groups organized along the thematic lines of manufacturing and trafficking, detecting emerging threats and patterns, and promoting public health. Three sub-working groups address drug demand reduction issues; specifically, 3.1 Preventing Drug Use; 3.2 Engaging People with Substance Use and Substance Use Disorders; and 3.3 Addressing Populations in Contact with the Criminal Justice System, including Alternatives to Incarceration focused on accessing drug treatment and support services. Two groups of government experts address the improvement of data collection and sharing. As of December 2023, over 1,600 government and international organizations representatives

have registered from 144 countries, and 11 international organizations participate in monthly sub-working group meetings to operationalize and advance shared objectives.

Universal Curriculum Training and Credentialing:

Through international organizations such as the Colombo Plan (CP), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the Organization of American States (OAS), INL trainings in 2023 helped prevent the initiation of drug use, improve treatment outcomes, and lowered relapse rates, thus generating greater confidence in drug demand reduction and treatment systems. With the adoption of online self-led training, the access to professional level training in drug demand reduction is global.

Universal Treatment Curriculum (UTC):

INL's treatment curriculum, based on the International Standards for the Treatment of Drug Use Disorders developed by UNODC and the World Health Organization, consists of eight basic and 14 advanced courses that provide knowledge and skills development for treatment professionals. As of December 2023, seven UTC self-led online courses are available globally in English and Spanish on the ISSUP website. The last course in the basic series on screening and assessment remains to be converted to an online format in 2024. An online instructor-led version of the Women's Interventions for Substance Exposure (WISE) courses is also available for use by Colombo Plan approved trainers. The self-led online UTC will vastly increase access to training and the subsequent use of best practices for treating those with substance use disorders. To further the improvement in treatment, INL established the International Consortium on Quality Assurance in Substance Use Treatment and has already provided technical assistance to several countries that wish to improve their treatment centers. As a result of the UTC trainings and credentialing program, at the end of 2022 there were 2135 credentialed professionals worldwide. A total of 824 tests were administrated by Colombo Plan's Global Centre for Credentialing and Certification in 2022.

Universal Prevention Curriculum (UPC):

INL's UPC offers innovative evidence-based approaches to substance use prevention in a variety of settings such as family, school, workplace, media, and the community. To greatly

expand training opportunities for substance use prevention professionals around the world, the online adaptation of nine UPC courses for Managers and Supervisors and the introductory course for Implementers were completed in Spanish and English in 2022. An evaluation of the impact of school-based prevention programs has been completed and validates the efficacy of these approaches. Online trainer-led versions of three of the Practitioners series of courses that focus on prevention in School, Family, and Monitoring and Evaluation programs will be completed in 2023.

Alternatives to Incarceration:

Alternatives to incarceration (ATI) conviction or punishment – including an emphasis on gaining access to drug treatment and care – can occur before an arrest, at an initial court hearing, within the jail, at re-entry, and through community corrections such as probation. In 2021 UNODC trained the ATI Policymakers course in Kenya resulting in the government's interest to pilot an alternative to incarceration pre-diversion program. UNODC continues to support Kenya in its efforts and trained the Case Care Management course in 2023 to integrate the judicial and public health sectors to provide services in a coordinated approach. In 2023, UNODC trained the ATI Policymakers course in Nigeria with plans to pilot an alternative to incarceration program. INL through the Colombo Plan trained the ATI policymakers course in Peru in 2023 and OAS/CICAD will train the course in Colombia in the Spring of 2024. With the launch of the Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats INL will support the International Consortium of Alternatives to Incarceration (ICATI) to support many more countries wanting to learn more about developing ATI systems in 2024.

The International Consortium of Universities for Drug Demand Reduction (ICUDDR):

INL continued its support for the ICUDDR, a network of universities working together to promote academic programs in addiction studies, to further the dissemination of evidence-based practices, and to develop the drug demand reduction workforce. In 2023, ICUDDR membership grew to 410 universities in 81 countries. With INL support, in 2022 ICUDDR joined with the Colombo Plan to support eight centers of excellence – International Technology Transfer Centers -- to strengthen drug demand reduction institutions worldwide.

The International Society of Substance Use Professionals (ISSUP):

INL continued to support ISSUP, a global professional society for those who work in substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery. In 2023, ISSUP passed the benchmark of over 32,000 members worldwide with over 40 national chapters. ISSUP supports professionals to provide training and share knowledge of evidence-based treatment practices through webinars, online training events, and web forum.

Drug-Free Communities:

INL assists civil society and grassroots organizations to form and sustain effective local-level anti-drug coalitions aimed at preventing substance use disorders in their communities, currently in cooperation with the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA). As of January 2022, INL support has resulted in the establishment of over 390 active coalitions consisting of over 12,900 volunteers in 29 countries around the world, some of which have continued to operate following the conclusion of INL funding.

Drug Demand Reduction Evaluation:

Building on previous outcome evaluations of individual demand reduction programs, INL launched in May 2022 a comprehensive evaluation of the collective impact of INL's drug use prevention, treatment, and recovery support programming on drug consumption and drug related-crime trends for a city-wide population. This evaluation, the most comprehensive study of demand reduction interventions to date, is being implemented in partnership with the Government of Colombia, municipal stakeholders, international organizations, and experts in the cities of Pereira and Dosquebradas.

Major Illicit Drug Producing, Drug-Transit, Significant Source, and Precursor Chemical Countries

Section 489(a)(3) of the FAA requires the INCSR to identify:

- (A) major illicit drug producing and major drug-transit countries;
- (B) major sources of precursor chemicals used in the production of illicit narcotics; or
- (C) major money laundering countries.

Major illicit drug producing and major drug-transit countries, and major sources of precursor chemicals used in the production of illicit narcotics, are identified below. Major money laundering countries are identified in Volume II of the INCSR.

Major Illicit Drug Producing and Major Drug-Transit Countries

A major illicit drug producing country is one in which:

- (A) 1,000 hectares or more of illicit opium poppy is cultivated or harvested during a year;
- (B) 1,000 hectares or more of illicit coca is cultivated or harvested during a year; or
- (C) 5,000 hectares or more of illicit cannabis is cultivated or harvested during a year unless the President determines that such illicit cannabis production does not significantly affect the United States. [FAA § 481(e)(2)]

A major drug-transit country is one:

- (A) that is a significant direct source of illicit narcotic or psychotropic drugs or other controlled substances significantly affecting the United States; or
- (B) through which are transported such drugs or substances. [FAA § 481(e)(5)]

The following major illicit drug producing and/or drug-transit countries were identified and notified to Congress by the President on September 15, 2023, consistent with section 706(1) of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2003 (Public Law 107-228):

Afghanistan, The Bahamas, Belize, Bolivia, Burma, People's Republic of China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Jamaica, Laos, Mexico, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela.

Of these 23 countries, **Bolivia, Burma, and Venezuela** were designated by the President as having “failed demonstrably” during the previous 12 months to adhere to their obligations under international counternarcotics agreements and take the measures set forth in section 489(a)(1) of the FAA. The President determined, however, in accordance with provisions of

Section 706(3)(A) of the FRAA, that continued support for bilateral programs in both countries, including for democracy assistance, is vital to the national interests of the United States.

Major Precursor Chemical Source Countries

The following countries and jurisdictions have been identified to be major sources of precursor or essential chemicals used in the production of illicit narcotics:

- Afghanistan
- Belgium
- Belize
- Bolivia
- Brazil
- Burma
- Canada
- People's Republic of China
- Colombia
- Costa Rica
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- Germany
- Guatemala
- Honduras
- Hong Kong
- India
- Republic of Korea
- Mexico
- the Netherlands
- Nigeria
- Pakistan
- Peru
- Poland
- South Africa
- Taiwan
- Thailand
- the United Arab Emirates
- the United Kingdom
- Venezuela.

Information is provided pursuant to section 489 of the FAA in the section entitled "Chemical Controls."

Presidential Determination

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 15, 2023

Presidential Determination No. 2023-12

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE

SUBJECT: Presidential Determination on Major Drug Transit or Major Illicit Drug Producing Countries for Fiscal Year 2024

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 706(1) of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2003 (Public Law 107-228) (FRAA), I hereby identify the following countries as major drug transit or major illicit drug producing countries: Afghanistan, The Bahamas, Belize, Bolivia, Burma, the People's Republic of China (PRC), Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Jamaica, Laos, Mexico, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela.

A country's presence on the foregoing list is not necessarily a reflection of its government's counterdrug efforts or level of cooperation with the United States. Consistent with the statutory definition of a major drug transit or major illicit drug producing country set forth in sections 481(e)(2) and 481(e)(5) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (Public Law 87-195) (FAA), the reason countries are placed on the list is the combination of geographic, commercial, and economic factors that allow drugs to be transited or produced, even if a government has engaged in robust and diligent narcotics control and law enforcement measures.

The James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (Public Law 117-263) amended the definition of major drug source countries to include source countries of precursor chemicals used to produce illicit drugs significantly affecting the United States. For countries with large chemical and pharmaceutical industries, preventing precursor chemicals from being diverted to the production of illicit drugs is a particularly difficult challenge, including for the United States and other countries with strict regulatory

regimes to prevent diversion. The PRC has been identified as a major source country due to this change in legislation, and the United States strongly urges the PRC and other chemical source countries to tighten chemical supply chains and prevent diversion.

Pursuant to section 706(2)(A) of the FRAA, I hereby designate Bolivia, Burma, and Venezuela as having failed demonstrably during the previous 12 months to both adhere to their obligations under the international counternarcotics agreements and to take the measures required by section 489(a)(1) of the FAA. Included with this determination are justifications for the designations of Bolivia, Burma, and Venezuela, as required by section 706(2)(B) of the FRAA. I have also determined, in accordance with provisions of section 706(3)(A) of the FRAA, that United States programs that support Bolivia, Burma, and Venezuela are vital to the national interests of the United States.

Although the rate of drug overdose deaths in the United States is flattening after years of sharp increases, more than 109,000 lives were lost to drug overdoses in 2022, according to preliminary data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This remains unacceptably high, and my Administration is deploying unprecedented resources and building new partnerships to confront this public health and security crisis. Domestically, in the last fiscal year alone, the United States allocated more than \$24 billion to expand evidence-based prevention and treatment, including harm reduction and recovery support services, with targeted investments to meet the needs of populations at greatest risk for overdose and substance use disorder. Beyond these additional resources, my Administration expanded access to Naloxone, which can reverse opioid-related overdoses, and made this life-saving medicine available over-the-counter. My Administration has also removed barriers to treatment, including by working with the Congress on bipartisan legislation. My Fiscal Year 2024 Budget calls for an even greater historic investment of \$46.1 billion for National Drug Control Program agencies, a more than \$2 billion increase from what was enacted during the previous year. This request also includes significant investments in reducing the supply of illicit drugs originating from beyond our borders.

The vast majority of illicit drugs causing the most damage in the United States originate from beyond our borders, and our most effective means of reducing the availability of these drugs is to expand and improve our cooperation with international partners. Most drug overdose deaths within the United States involve illicit synthetic drugs and particularly synthetic opioids such as fentanyl. These synthetic drugs can be produced anywhere using

precursor chemicals widely available for legitimate purposes, at a fraction of the cost and time it takes criminal organizations to produce dangerous drugs from plants.

Every country and region of the globe faces its own challenges from synthetic drugs. In Africa, the synthetic opioid tramadol is driving increasing numbers of injuries and fatalities, especially when mixed with other drugs. In the Middle East, synthetic stimulants are trafficked and sold as counterfeit captagon in large quantities. Ketamine -- a synthetic anesthetic with hallucinogenic effects -- is increasingly encountered throughout Asia, and it is being found mixed with methamphetamine, which appears to be growing more prevalent and more potent all over the world. And the categories of synthetic drugs are constantly shifting, as drug traffickers adjust formulas to avoid international controls and domestic regulations to create new demand. More than 1,100 new psychoactive substances and designer drugs have been detected and reported to the United Nations over the past decade alone.

To confront this common challenge, the United States launched this past summer a new Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats. This diverse coalition of countries and international organizations will share best practices and expand cooperation to prevent the illicit manufacture and trafficking of synthetic drugs, detect emerging drug threats and use patterns, and promote public health interventions to prevent and reduce drug use and promote recovery. The United States welcomes all like-minded governments to participate in the work of this coalition and join efforts against these rapidly evolving global threats.

The political commitment of our international partners remains critical to achieving success against illicit drug threats, and no country is more important than Mexico. Under the Bicentennial Framework for Security, Public Health, and Safe Communities, our two countries have cooperated to seize greater volumes of fentanyl and other drugs. We have worked successfully during the last year to improve law enforcement collaboration, prevent the diversion of precursor chemicals, and arrest key organized crime figures involved in drugs and firearms trafficking, migrant smuggling, and other criminal activity. Sadly, some of these arrests resulted in the loss of lives of Mexican officials, and their sacrifices underscore the shared commitment from both countries to do what is necessary to fight these criminal organizations. To that end and to build on the increased cooperation of the past year, both countries should continue strengthening law enforcement information sharing and collaboration; build capacity to detect and counter drug production and

trafficking and diversion of chemicals and drug-related equipment; and improve mechanisms to monitor, prevent, and treat drug substance use disorders.

With our key partners in South America, the United States will continue to support ongoing efforts to reduce coca cultivation and cocaine production, expand access to justice, and promote alternative livelihoods. Colombia has historically been a strong partner in the fight against the drug trade. Nevertheless, illicit coca cultivation and cocaine production remain at historically high levels, and I urge the Government of Colombia to prioritize efforts to expand its presence in coca-producing regions and achieve sustainable progress against criminal organizations. In Bolivia, I encourage additional steps by the government to safeguard the country's licit coca markets from criminal exploitation, reduce illicit coca cultivation that continues to exceed legal limits under Bolivia's domestic laws for medical and traditional use, and continue to expand cooperation with international partners to disrupt transnational criminal networks.

Afghanistan has been removed from the list of countries determined to have "failed demonstrably" due to progress made within that country over the past year in reducing the cultivation of opium poppy and production of illicit narcotics. However, I remain concerned by the continuation of the illicit drug trade within and originating from Afghanistan, including methamphetamine. The country's drug control efforts must be sustained and expanded to include meaningful steps against drug trafficking and the drug supply chain, including by eliminating illicit drug stockpiles and curbing methamphetamine production. I will reconsider Afghanistan's status during the next annual review based on whether these additional steps are taken, in keeping with Afghanistan's international drug control commitments and in full respect for the human rights of its people.

You are authorized and directed to submit this designation, with the Bolivia, Burma, and Venezuela memoranda of justification, under section 706 of the FRAA, to the Congress, and to publish this determination in the Federal Register.

/S/

Joseph R. Biden

U.S. Government Assistance

U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

**Table 2: U.S. Department of State FY 2023-2024 Budget;
Counternarcotics Program Area**

\$ in thousands for all items

Location	FY 2023 Request	FY 2024 Request
World-wide	374,679	343,369
Africa Total	1,100	1,100
Liberia	850	850
Nigeria	250	250
East Asia and Pacific Total	2,805	2,554
Indonesia	875	624
Laos	500	500
Philippines	430	430
Vietnam	1,000	1,000
South and Central Asia Total	11,517	9,517
Afghanistan	5,000	3,000
Kazakhstan	367	367
Pakistan	3,000	3,000
Tajikistan	1,000	1,000
Uzbekistan	200	200
Central Asia Regional	1,950	1,950
Western Hemisphere Total	224,585	175,125
Colombia	115,500	73,900
Mexico	13,000	9,000

Peru	42,685	38,700
State Central America Regional	46,450	47,075
of which, CARSI	46,450	47,075
State Western Hemisphere Regional	6,950	6,450
of which, CBSI	6,450	6,450
of which, other	500	0
INL - International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Total	134,672	155,073
INL - Demand Reduction	15,000	15,000
INL - Drug Supply Reduction	19,933	20,000
INL - Global Crime and Drugs Policy	3,095	3,095
INL - Inter-regional Aviation Support	37,400	60,400
INL - Program Development and Support	59,244	56,578

International Training

Bilateral and Regional Training as Component of Broader Foreign Assistance

Most of the counternarcotics assistance programs managed and funded by the Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) include, among other components, capacity-building aimed at improving the skills of host country law enforcement personnel, such as training on counterdrug matters. These program elements build counterdrug capacity, strengthen the administration of justice generally, and enhance cooperation between U.S. and foreign law enforcement officials on addressing illicit narcotics production and trafficking.

By integrating capacity building, including training, into INL's assistance programs – rather than focusing on equipment or infrastructure - INL aims to galvanize and sustain long-term organizational change. Building our partners' capacity is an evolving challenge as drug

traffickers develop more sophisticated means to evade detection. INL's overarching goal is to help develop law enforcement institutions in host countries that are able to effectively confront new threats with minimal or no U.S. assistance, thus be better equipped to confront new threats, disrupt criminal networks, and seize illicit drugs before they reach the United States. To be effective, INL supports training that aligns with the host government's priorities, legal context, and criminal justice system; targets identified performance gaps; and is accompanied by non-training efforts that will enable on-the-job application and performance, such as relevant policies and procedures, necessary equipment, and leadership support. INL codified these and other recommended training practices in 2021 in INL's Guiding Principles for Training, a set of seven standards with accompanying checklists and a distance-learning training module for INL personnel and partners overseeing foreign assistance training.

The United States continuously engages with its allies to understand their goals and programs with the intention of creating aligned, mutually reinforcing programs that do not duplicate or inadvertently contradict one another. U.S.-supported training can take a number of forms, including as part of a bilateral assistance program in a partner country, or as training that convenes international participants from multiple countries, such as that INL provides through the International Law Enforcement Academies (ILEAs). INL seeks partners to implement the bureau's training and other programs that are the best fit for the specific need. Therefore, some of these programs involve collaboration with international organizations, such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), while others are implemented by U.S. federal, state, and local law enforcement organizations, including the Department of Justice, the Drug Enforcement Administration, Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and the U.S. Coast Guard. Others draw trainers from host country partners that have themselves been the recipient of U.S.-funded programs, to train other law enforcement forces in their region.

The latter model is one of the most promising for several reasons: trainers are already conversant with the regional culture and language; they likely have experienced common region-specific challenges in addressing illicit drugs; and both trainers and trained staff gain valuable regional contacts. Further, teaching others not only instills a sense of leadership and pride in the trainers, but also fosters better thematic understanding and problem-solving skills, thus building capacity on both sides. A successful example of this model is the U.S.-Colombia Action Plan on Regional Security Cooperation (USCAP). The program was

created in 2013 to address and combat the detrimental regional effects of narcotics trafficking and transnational organized crime by drawing on Colombia's growing expertise in countering these threats. In its first year, USCAP supported fewer than 30 activities; as of December 2023, it has supported 2,774 capacity building activities implemented by the Colombian National Police and Colombian Navy and has trained 42,175 police officers and other officials in the region – 7,212 during the global pandemic in 2020 and 2021. Twelve police forces from Mexico to Argentina participate in the plan.

Regionalizing Synthetic Drug Training Programs

INL has also found success in offering training programming on a regional basis in response to the growing synthetic drug threat. In Guatemala, INL has partnered with UNODC on a regional training program on chemical safe handling, storage, identification, and destruction best practices. Counternarcotics police participants were drawn from Guatemala, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru to learn about trends in plant and synthetic drug manufacturing and identification and the investigation of clandestine drug laboratories. On November 28, 2023, the counternarcotics police in Guatemala put these skills to use with a major seizure of chemicals linked to methamphetamine manufacturing.

International Law Enforcement Academies (ILEAs)

The INL-funded International Law Enforcement Academies (ILEAs) are regional training centers at which U.S. law enforcement experts train criminal justice sector officials from participating countries. The overarching goal is to strengthen democratic governance through the rule of law and increase social, political, and economic stability by combating drug trafficking and crime. Courses are designed for mid- to senior-level managers, and topics cover both general law enforcement issues and specialized topics in combatting transnational organized crime (TOC), including counternarcotics, anticorruption, cybercrime, and border control matters. Courses integrate material on promoting human rights and ensuring the rule of law. INL sponsors, funds, and administers the program in partnership with host governments and seventeen federal law enforcement partners.

The ILEAs help build the capacity of the United States' foreign criminal justice partners to effectively confront transnational criminal threats before they impact the United States and connect these partners to one another and to U.S. law enforcement to address shared

threats. The Department of State works with the Departments of Justice, Homeland Security, Interior, Energy, Commerce, and Treasury, as well as with state and local partners and foreign government counterparts.

Since its inception in 1995, the ILEA program has grown to six facilities in Botswana, El Salvador, Ghana, Hungary, Thailand, and the United States (New Mexico). It has provided training to more than 77,000 students from 160 countries in Africa, Europe, Asia, and Latin America. The ILEA program hosts approximately 180 courses per year and delivers a combination of in-person and virtual trainings. Training at the five overseas academies includes leadership and specialized skill development and tactics in law enforcement areas to combat TOC, trafficking in persons, and cybercrime. The ILEA in Roswell, New Mexico provides symposiums for senior and executive level personnel to develop leadership skills and address critical policy areas.

The ILEA trainings have resulted in an extensive network of alumni who exchange information with their regional and U.S. counterparts in order to collaborate in combating TOC. Many ILEA graduates have become leaders and decisionmakers in their respective law enforcement organizations. Following participation in ILEA courses, participants become a part of the ILEA Global Network and have access to the global ILEA Alumni Portal, which provides a platform for practitioners to identify and discuss emerging trends and issues of mutual interest. The portal connects users with one another and with U.S. law enforcement instructors through blogs, networking events, resources, and discussion boards.

During the first nine months of 2023 the collective ILEAs trained over 4,200 students and conducted 129 courses. In April 2023, the program held the ILEA Day awards ceremony at the Department of State. A total of 133 ILEA alumni (who were collectively responsible for over \$1.4 billion of seized illicit goods) were nominated for awards, and 44 finalists from 24 countries attended in person and were recognized for their success.

- **Africa.** ILEA Gaborone (Botswana) opened in 2001 and the Regional Training Center (RTC) in Accra (Ghana) opened in 2012. ILEA Gaborone and RTC Accra deliver specialized courses for police and other criminal justice officials in Africa to boost their capacity to work with U.S. and regional counterparts. These courses concentrate on methods and techniques in a variety of subjects, such as

anticorruption, counternarcotics, financial crimes, border security, crime scene investigations, explosives, trafficking in persons, narcotics, and wildlife, gender-based violence, and community policing.

- **Asia.** ILEA Bangkok (Thailand), which was established in 1998, focuses on enhancing regional cooperation against transnational crime threats in Southeast Asia with member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). ILEA Bangkok's specialized courses focus on anticorruption, cybercrime, and trafficking in persons, counternarcotics, narcotics, and wildlife.
- **Europe.** ILEA Budapest (Hungary) was the first ILEA, established in 1995. It offers courses on regional threats including anticorruption, organized crime, cybercrime, counternarcotics, financial crimes, women in law enforcement, and specialized training for judges and prosecutors.
- **Global.** ILEA Roswell (New Mexico) opened in September 2001. It hosts senior officials and policy makers including top prosecutors, judges, police commanders and lawmakers to discuss ways to achieve effective criminal justice systems. These delegates are at the senior levels of leadership and decision making in their countries and are positioned to implement substantive changes to the criminal justice systems upon their return. ILEA Roswell draws senior and executive level officials from all participating ILEA countries.
- **Latin America and the Caribbean.** ILEA San Salvador (El Salvador) opened in 2005. It offers courses on leadership, anti-gang efforts, human rights, counternarcotics, border security, anticorruption, and financial crimes.

Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)

DEA is the primary law enforcement agency in the United States dedicated to addressing the national drug crisis. The mission of the DEA is to ensure the safety and health of American communities by combating and defeating the criminal drug networks responsible for harm, violence, and drug poisonings.

To accomplish this mission, DEA employs approximately 10,000 personnel throughout the world – including Special Agents, Diversion Investigators, Intelligence Analysts, Administrative Support Specialists and Chemists across 241 domestic offices and 93 foreign offices in 69 countries. DEA engages in innovative, data-driven policing for the safety, security, and well-being of the American people.

Ten percent of DEA's Special Agent and Intelligence Analyst personnel are assigned abroad. DEA's foreign offices deliver actionable and strategic intelligence and evidence to law enforcement and prosecutorial entities in the United States and around the world. The intelligence and evidence enable DEA to identify, target, and dismantle the entire global network of some transnational criminal organizations.

DEA's foreign offices are tasked with the following principal objectives:

- conduct bilateral and multilateral investigations with host country law enforcement partners
- coordinate counternarcotic intelligence gathering with host governments
- develop and expand host nation capacity and capabilities in drug law enforcement through strategic partnerships
- facilitate and encourage information sharing with foreign counterparts
- coordinate and provide training programs for foreign law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies
- advance and develop host country drug law enforcement institutions

DEA tailors each objective to the host nation's unique circumstances regarding to their drug trafficking threats, infrastructure, law enforcement capabilities, and nexus to the United States.

The State Department Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) funds some of the DEA's Sensitive Investigative Unit (SIU) and Vetted Unit (VU) programs. The purpose of those programs is to train, equip, build the capacity of, and support specialized counternarcotic units within partner nations' police forces. Unit members undergo rigorous background checks, polygraphs, and vetting to ensure success and help prevent potential infiltration by corrupt officers. These units work closely with DEA to

develop and share intelligence to target, dismantle, and prosecute transnational criminal organizations. The success of these programs has inspired other federal agencies to model their programs after DEA's and has also motivated foreign counterparts to establish SIUs in their countries.

In Fiscal Year 2023, INL provided funding support under 19 Interagency Agreements to build the capacity of, train, and equip DEA's host-nation counterparts. DEA works side by side with those counterparts to develop and deliver relevant training, promote intelligence sharing, conduct bilateral investigations, and support joint counterdrug operations. The vast majority of DEA's foreign efforts and resources are dedicated to conducting international drug and money-laundering investigations. For example, DEA partnered with INL to establish a Vetted Unit consisting of Argentine police forces to serve as a strong counterdrug partner in Argentina and completed DEA's first ever Vetted Unit Basic School.

Diversion Control: The mission of DEA's Diversion Control Division (DC) is to prevent, detect, and investigate the diversion of pharmaceutical controlled substances and listed chemicals from legitimate channels, while ensuring an adequate and uninterrupted supply to meet legitimate medical, commercial, and scientific needs.

DC regulates over 2.1 million DEA registrants, such as physicians. It conducts drug scheduling and compliance with international treaty obligations, drafts and promulgates regulations, liaises with industry, conducts drug trend analysis to forecast potential new diversion drug trends, and oversees the importation and exportation of controlled substances and listed chemicals.

International Training: DEA's International Training Office (TRI) has been conducting international counternarcotics training, mentoring, and capacity building for almost 50 years. DEA's role has grown to include that of international consultant to law enforcement agencies and foreign governments seeking to develop high-quality narcotics law enforcement programs, organizational infrastructures, and judicial reforms.

TRI offers domestic, in-country, and regional training programs conducted by four dedicated mobile training teams. The major objectives of DEA's international training programs are to enhance foreign law enforcement capabilities, develop self-sufficient narcotics investigation training programs, and foster cooperation and communication between foreign and domestic law enforcement personnel in international drug trafficking operations.

In Fiscal Year 2022, the most recent period for which data is available, TRI successfully conducted 93 courses overseas, training 2,411 foreign law enforcement counterparts from various countries. TRI conducted courses at the Department of State's International Law Enforcement Academies in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Central America, as well as in other host nation training facilities around the world. In addition, the office also supported and conducted six virtual training courses for foreign counterparts.

International Drug Enforcement Conference (IDEC) - Strengthening International Relations: IDEC was established in 1983 as an important global forum for high-ranking agency leaders and prosecutors from approximately 130 countries across the world. Participants work together to develop a cooperative vision and establish strategies for combating transnational criminal organizations. The IDEC's multilateral enforcement approach has had a cumulative effect, as member nations increasingly coordinate their law enforcement efforts to investigate and prosecute major DTOs and their leaders and to seize and block their assets. After a four-year hiatus due to COVID-19 restrictions, the IDEC conference took place in in 2023 in St. James, Jamaica.

Special Testing and Research Laboratory Programs: The Heroin and Cocaine Signature Programs at DEA's Special Testing and Research Laboratory (STRL) determine the geographic origins of heroin and cocaine seizure samples. In addition, the laboratory maintains a Methamphetamine Profiling Program and Fentanyl Profiling Program that determines the synthetic routes and precursor chemicals used in producing methamphetamine and fentanyl respectively. STRL developed the classification schemes for these programs using authentic samples collected from drug source countries worldwide, as well as from drug-processing laboratories in those countries. By collaborating with partner nations, DEA's foreign offices submit drug samples annually to the laboratory. The laboratory collects several thousand drug exhibits seized within the United States and abroad and profiles them for tracking and intelligence purposes. This program assists investigators in helping to determine countries, and in some cases regions, of origin for seized samples.

These Signature and Profiling Programs use in-depth analysis to provide science-based forensic intelligence to provide the counterdrug intelligence/enforcement community and U.S. policymakers with science-based heroin and cocaine source data and intelligence regarding methamphetamine and fentanyl synthesis. These are crucial tools to investigate

and support strategic intelligence regarding illicit production, trafficking, and availability of these dangerous drugs in the United States and foreign countries.

DEA Operations Division/Office of Financial Investigations: The mission of the Financial Investigations Section (ODF) is to augment all DEA domestic and foreign money-laundering/threat finance investigations. ODF provides assistance, expertise, and support to identify, document, and prosecute drug money laundering organizations operating globally. It builds capacity among federal, state, local, and international law enforcement counterparts and interacts with the financial services industry in money-laundering/threat finance investigations. Through DEA's foreign offices, ODF assists countries in identifying and prosecuting money laundering organizations that operate as part of or on behalf of transnational criminal organizations.

ODF regularly briefs United States government officials, domestic and international law enforcement counterparts, and financial-related agencies/institutions on the latest money-laundering techniques and trends. Additionally, ODF conducts training for domestic DEA field offices and DEA's host country counterparts in foreign locations to share ideas, share best practices, and promote effective techniques in anti-money-laundering efforts.

United States Coast Guard (USCG)

The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) plays a vital role in the Department of Homeland Security's efforts to implement the United States' National Drug Control Strategy and reduce the availability of illicit drugs in the United States. As the lead federal agency for maritime drug interdictions, the USCG deploys cutters, boats, aircraft, and unmanned systems in a layered approach to combat transnational criminal organizations (TCO) as they attempt to transport illicit drugs through the western hemisphere and into the United States. By collaborating with U.S. interagency and partner nations, and by leveraging the USCG's unique authorities and capabilities, the USCG engages the threat beyond our land borders on the high seas where traffickers are most exposed and illicit drug shipments are most vulnerable to interdiction by law enforcement.

Combating the national security threat posed by TCOs and their manufacturing and trafficking of illicit drugs requires robust interagency partnerships. To target shipments inbound to the United States, the USCG works with U.S. combatant commands and other

federal, state, and local agencies. The Department of Defense, Customs and Border Protection, and other partners provide maritime and aerial platforms with surveillance capabilities to facilitate interdiction efforts and enable USCG operations. The USCG's most capable interdiction platforms include cutters with embarked helicopters and unmanned systems, pursuit boats, and Law Enforcement Detachments (LEDET). These LEDETs routinely deploy on U.S. Navy and partner nation ships, supplementing the inventory of USCG cutters.

Strong international relationships ensure the USCG can conduct interdiction operations far from U.S. borders. In collaboration with the Departments of State and Justice, the USCG maintains more than 46 bilateral agreements and operational procedures with partner nations, focused on countering illicit transnational maritime activities. These agreements enable U.S. law enforcement authorities to board suspect trafficking vessels on the high seas and in partner nation territorial waters to deter and disrupt illicit maritime trafficking.

Counternarcotics Operations:

Suspected illicit drug trafficking vessels are detected through interagency intelligence, international collaboration, and information obtained from multi-domain sensors. Actionable intelligence combined with air and maritime surveillance help maximize interdiction success. In Fiscal Year 2023, high levels of irregular maritime migration persisted, reducing the USCG's ability to support drug interdiction missions. The USCG increased helicopter support to partner nations and relied heavily on their maritime drug interdiction capabilities. These operations resulted in increased interdiction successes including partner nation removals.

International Cooperative Efforts:

In 2023, USCG personnel were permanently assigned overseas as USCG Liaison Officers, Senior Defense Officials/Defense Attachés, Coast Guard Attachés, Maritime Advisors, and USCG Section Chief (Mexico). These personnel enhanced interoperability, boosted regional security assistance programs, increased intelligence collection and dissemination, and strengthened prosecutorial support for maritime drug trafficking cases.

The Technical Assistance Field Team, a joint initiative between the USCG, U.S. Army, and U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), aims to develop the maintenance and logistics capabilities of our Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) partners, increase maritime interceptor operational readiness, enhance maintenance/logistics skill absorption, and shift the organizational focus of our partners toward preventative maintenance and self-sufficiency.

In partnership with SOUTHCOM and the Department of State, the USCG executes the maritime training exercise TRADEWINDS. TRADEWINDS focuses on CBSI partner nations and is the only validation exercise for the U.S.-funded Secure Seas Maritime Support Package. It provides an essential linkage between the operational resources supported and maintained by the Technical Assistance Field Team and regional operational plans and strategies developed through the Multilateral Maritime Interdiction and Prosecution Summit program by offering a venue to build tactical-level relationships and conduct scenario-based exercises to validate regional capabilities.

The USCG's Support to Interdiction and Prosecution program, established in collaboration with the Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, focuses on enhancing investigative, law enforcement, and prosecutorial functions; supporting cross-border law enforcement cooperation; and equipping criminal justice systems with a trustworthy legal framework. In Fiscal Year 2024, the program will be establishing a position in Jamaica while looking to expand and provide similar support to other countries receiving assistance under the CBSI.

To counter transatlantic drug flows and other illicit maritime activity, including piracy, weapons trafficking, and illegal fishing, the USCG works with U.S. Africa Command to expand maritime training and combined maritime law enforcement operations with West and East African countries through the African Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership program.

International Training and Technical Assistance: The USCG's Security Assistance Program offers resident training programs, mobile training teams (MTTs), and technical assistance to partner nation maritime services around the world to enhance their interdiction capacity.

In Fiscal Year 2023, the USCG deployed 80 MTTs to 24 countries, training 1,300 students. Through the USCG's international resident training program, 279 international students from

66 countries graduated from 37 different resident courses at USCG training centers. The international training program supplements geographic combatant commanders' theater security cooperation objectives, while deepening the USCG's partnerships with foreign nations combatting shared maritime security challenges.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), a component of the Department of Homeland Security, processes all goods, vehicles, and people entering and exiting the United States and is charged with passport control and agriculture inspections. CBP officers, Border Patrol agents, Air and Marine interdiction agents, and other personnel are charged with prevention of terrorist travel to the United States and interception of illicit drugs and other contraband, improperly classified merchandise, unlicensed technology and material, weapons, ammunition, fugitives, undocumented immigrants, and unreported currency at the United States' 328 international ports of entry (POEs), 135 US Border Patrol Stations and five Substations, and 74 Air and Marine Operations Branches and Units.

CBP also supports the INCB-led international narcotics control efforts including the INL-supported Project Ion Incident Communication System (IONICS) by sharing incidents involving the trafficking or manufacture of illicit drugs. This cooperation fosters global partnerships with UN Member States, intergovernmental organizations, and the private sector.

Training:

- **Port of Entry Interdiction Training:** In addition to training at POEs, CBP provides training in techniques in smuggling contraband across lightly patrolled borders rather than at official POEs.
- **International Bulk Currency Smuggling Training:** CBP assists foreign government personnel in identifying techniques used by bulk currency smugglers and developing programs to counter this crime and seize its proceeds.
- **Overseas Enforcement Training:** This training includes Border Enforcement; Supply Chain Security; Detection, Interdiction, and Investigation; Concealment

Methods; Bulk Currency Smuggling; False and Fraudulent Documents; Train-the-Trainer; Anti-Corruption; Targeting and Risk Management; Hazardous Materials; and X-ray Systems.

Relevant components and associated counternarcotics functions:

- **Office of Field Operations (OFO)** is the largest operational office in CBP with 33,000 employees responsible for securing U.S. POEs. OFO effectively safeguards, facilitates, and expedites legitimate trade and travel, while concurrently detecting and preventing unauthorized travel, illegitimate trade, and smuggling. OFO utilizes a multifaceted approach that integrates advanced detection capabilities, such as specialized canine units and non-intrusive inspection technology, laboratory testing, scientific analysis, fostering domestic law enforcement and foreign government partnerships, and emphasizing intelligence and information sharing.
- **Office of Field Operations, National Canine Enforcement Program (NCEP):** The NCEP provides technical expertise on the use of canines in customs environments to detect fentanyl and other dangerous drugs, currency, concealed humans, and firearms. Working at POEs across the country, canine teams provide a reliable and unequalled mobile detection capability. The NCEP works with the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the Department of State to identify global partners that would benefit from canine fentanyl detection capability. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the NCEP shared canine health information with the WCO and other global partners.
- **Immigration Advisory Program (IAP):** The IAP Division within the Office of Field Operations (OFO) supports international drug control efforts from 18 permanent sites around the globe. The first of its three models is the IAP, which engages with air carriers at foreign airports to prevent terrorists and other high-risk passengers from boarding U.S.-bound flights. The Joint Security Program (JSP) model identifies high-risk air travelers and contraband arriving and departing the foreign host country and partners CBP Officers with local law enforcement partners. The third model deploys Police Liaison Officers (LOs) to partner with foreign law enforcement agencies and U.S. government partners to enhance information exchange related to terrorist and criminal travel and smuggling threats.

- **Office of Field Operations Special Response Team (SRT):** DHS and CBP use the SRT to support CBP international initiatives, including International Affairs International Training and Assistance Division; CBP Advisors and Special Customs' Programs; CBP Pre-Clearance; Immigration Advisory Program/ Joint Security Program; and various other special mission requests. SRT provides advanced tactical enforcement training; threat and vulnerability assessments in host countries prior to deployment; and conducts site surveys identifying vulnerabilities in the host country to identify capacity building needs. SRT also provides training to CBP employees prior to deployment to foreign assignments.
- **United States Border Patrol (USBP)** agents are responsible for securing the 8,000 miles of land and coastal border between the POEs against smugglers, other criminals, potential terrorists, and persons seeking to avoid inspection at the POEs. The USBP conducts different border operations including line watch conducted near international boundaries and coastlines, city patrol and transportation checks, and operates immigration checkpoints on major U.S. highways and secondary roads, generally between 25 and 100 miles of the southwest and northern borders. An estimated 50 million vehicles are estimated to pass through these checkpoints each year. USBP maintains 35 permanent and 189 tactical checkpoints, the purpose of which is to detect and apprehend (1) persons seeking to enter the country in violation of immigration law; (2) smugglers of persons or contraband, including drugs; and (3) suspected terrorists attempting to travel into the interior of the U.S. after evading detection at the border.
- **CBP USBP Foreign Operations Division (FOD):** USBP Foreign Operations are part of CBP's comprehensive international security efforts to extend border security beyond U.S. boundaries through a cohesive approach with domestic and foreign partners. USBP FOD enhances information sharing with law enforcement and other relevant agencies by monitoring indicators of irregular migration and reporting to DHS and CBP for situational awareness and preparedness.
- **U.S. Border Patrol Special Operations Headquarters (SOH)** Central America Advisory Support and Training: The SOH coordinates with USBP FOD and INA in developing strategy and policy regarding overseas operations. It supports USBP vetted interdiction units in Central American countries and, in coordination with

interagency partners, provides advisors to Central American governments on border security and information sharing on air passengers.

- **U.S. Border Patrol Special Operations Headquarters (SOH)** Central America Advisory Support and Training: The SOH coordinates with USBP FOD and INA in developing strategy and policy regarding overseas operations. It supports USBP vetted interdiction units in Central American countries and, in coordination with interagency partners, provides advisors to Central American governments on border security and information sharing on air passengers.
- **Air and Marine Operations (AMO)** addresses security threats through aviation and maritime law enforcement with over 70 locations, over 240 aircraft, and over 300 vessels covering from Maine to Florida, Washington to California, Northern and Southern borders, and an approximately 42-million-square-mile area which includes more than 40 nations and the Pacific Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean Sea, and seaboard approaches to the United States.
- **AMO Foreign Operations:** AMO conducts operations, training, program assessments, and capacity building in collaboration with U.S. partners throughout the world. AMO collaborates with CBP International Affairs, CBP Attachés, and other international partners to strengthen its ability to counter transnational crime. In the source and transit zones, AMO has collaborated with the Departments of State and Defense to develop initiatives that build aviation and maritime capacity of partner nations in Africa, the Caribbean, Central America, and Mexico.
- **AMO National Airspace Security Operations (NASO):** NASO regularly schedules airborne operations using surveillance aircraft in the 42 million square miles of Caribbean and Eastern Pacific Ocean known as the transit zone. It coordinates with numerous U.S. and international law enforcement and military partners who cooperate in combating transnational organized crime. NASO has successfully integrated AMO's Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) into their foreign operations and is actively working to expand UAS operations throughout the source and transit zone.
- **Office of Trade (OT)** facilitates legitimate trade and protects the American economy and national security. Collaborating with industry and government partners, it

develops streamlined processes that provide certainty for legitimate importers, while combating transnational organized crime and safeguarding environmental standards and human rights.

- **Office of International Affairs:** CBP's Office of International Affairs (INA) works with other U.S. government agencies and foreign government partners to share information and intelligence and promote CBP international programs on counterterrorism, border security, nonproliferation, export controls, and building partner capacity. INA leads CBP's international efforts by strengthening bilateral and multilateral relationships, enhancing foreign partners' border security capacities, and by programs that identify high-risk travelers, cargo, and non-citizens that pose security risks.
- **CBP INA Attachés, Representatives and Advisors, and Special Customs Programs:** CBP Attachés and Advisors are posted in U.S. Embassies and Consulates where they advise mission leadership on CBP programs and capabilities. In 2023, CBP had 25 Attachés, 3 Deputy Attaches, 7 CBP Representatives, and 12 partner-funded Advisors in 30 countries. Attachés exchange information with foreign counterparts to improve the effectiveness of law enforcement activity; negotiate international agreements (e.g., Customs Mutual Assistance Agreements); promote initiatives to deter and dismantle transnational criminal organizations; and educating stakeholders about CBP's many international programs such as the Container Security Initiative (CSI), Immigration Advisory Programs (IAP), Customs Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (CTPAT), and various trade and capacity building programs.
- **Customs Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (CTPAT):** CTPAT is a voluntary public-private sector partnership to enhance cargo security with partners including importers/exporters, U.S./Canada and U.S./Mexico highway carriers; rail and sea carriers; licensed U.S. Customs brokers; U.S. marine port authority/terminal operators; U.S. freight consolidators; ocean transportation intermediaries and non-operating common carriers; Mexican and Canadian manufacturers; and Mexico long-haul highway carriers.

- **Container Security Initiative:** The Container Security Initiative Division (CSI) in the Office of Field Operations works alongside host country government and industry partners in 35 countries to enhance cargo security through targeting shipments of high-risk goods destined to the United States. CSI supports CBP international cooperation through development of strong relationships and support through technical assistance, capacity building and training efforts.
- **Customs Mutual Assistance Agreements:** In consultation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement, CBP leads negotiations of CMAAs with foreign governments. CMAAs provide for mutual assistance in the enforcement of customs-related laws. As of Fiscal Year 2023, the United States had 74 CMAAs signed and entered into force.
- **Preclearance Operations:** Preclearance operations enhance aviation security by stationing CBP personnel overseas to inspect travelers prior to boarding U.S.-bound flights. They conduct the same immigration, customs, and agriculture inspections of international air travelers typically performed upon arrival in the United States, serving as a visible deterrent to those looking to conduct illicit activities within the United States before they set foot on U.S. soil.
- **National Targeting Center:** The National Targeting Center (NTC) collaborates with international partners to identify, disrupt, and manage cargo and passenger risks – including terrorism, drug trafficking, and other criminal activity - through information sharing and joint targeting operations in accordance with memoranda of understanding and CMAAs. It provides training and technical assistance in risk assessment to foreign customs, immigration, and other border enforcement agencies through several partnership programs.
- **NTC International Targeting Center (ITC):** The ITC is a multinational targeting cell within the CBP NTC. It was established as a unified hub to coordinate and connect “Border 5” agencies (an informal forum on border management between Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States) in anticipating, identifying, preventing, and monitoring criminal border related target related activity. ITC members are co-located within the NTC, alongside fellowship members from other countries including Germany, France, Spain, Brazil, and Colombia.

- **NTC International Fellowship:** The Fellowship program, with the same aims as the ITC, hosts Intelligence and targeting personnel from all B5 countries, along with CBP representation.
- **Department of Defense (DOD) Preclearance:** The Customs Border Clearance Agent (CBCA) program permits cargo consigned to the care of DOD, as well as returning military personnel, to be pre-cleared for import/entry into the United States by DOD personnel who have been trained by CBP. CBCA personnel conduct Customs and Agricultural inspections and certify personnel and cargo have met all entry requirements and Defense Travel Regulations prior to departing to the United States.
- **Biometric Identification Transnational Migration Alert Program (BITMAP):** BITMAP is a host country-led initiative in which DHS/Homeland Security Investigations and USBP train and equip foreign counterparts to collect biometric and biographic data on persons posing potential national security risks, gang members, and other persons of law enforcement interest. Foreign partners share this data with ICE and CBP to enhance U.S. efforts to target criminal networks and individuals and identify illicit pathways and emerging crime trends.
- **Office of Intelligence: The Office of Intelligence (OI)** plays a critical role in providing timely, actionable, and relevant intelligence to frontline operators that supports CBP's strategic, operational, and tactical intelligence needs. OI collaborates with the customs intelligence offices across the world to exchange information and increase awareness of criminal trends.
- **Fentanyl Campaign Directorate, operating within the National Targeting Center (NTC),** is a whole-of-CBP approach to target the domestic and international production, trafficking, and distribution of illicit fentanyl and other synthetic drugs, guided by the 2023 CBP Strategy to Combat Fentanyl and Other Synthetic Drugs. It is responsible for leading and influencing CBP's internal, national, and public policy, in line with White House and DHS goals. It organizes and coordinates CBP offices and external partnerships to create a unified approach to combat the synthetic drug threat.

Chemical Controls

U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

Introduction

A continuing challenge in countering the illicit drug trade is controlling the chemicals used to produce them. Almost all drugs require the use of precursor chemicals to transform them into a final product. For plant-based drugs like cocaine and heroin, those chemicals are one of a number of ingredients; for synthetic drugs, which are rapidly proliferating in illicit drug markets, they constitute the essential components. In both cases, keeping precursor chemicals away from criminals is vital to the control of drugs. But because many such chemicals have legitimate uses in industry and medicine, preventing their theft or diversion to illicit ends is extremely challenging. Doing so requires continued vigilance and cooperation among law enforcement officials, industry, governments, and international organizations. Strong domestic laws are necessary to control the production, transport, sale, and storage of these substances, together with continued cooperation with the private sector and information sharing with the international community.

Robust control systems are in place in the domestic laws of many countries and within the international community as well, with drugs and precursor chemicals placed into categories or “schedules” to control their availability depending on their acceptable medical use. However, these systems are continually challenged as criminal organizations adapt to evade these controls and as the non-scheduled chemicals and drug analogues known as new psychoactive substances (NPS) continue to rapidly increase and evolve. As synthetic drugs are so easily manufactured without the need for elaborate infrastructure, and because the chemicals needed to produce them vary so greatly, they are much harder to control. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has identified over 1,200 different forms of NPS and estimates that potential fentanyl analogues alone number in the thousands. In contrast, the main chemicals used to produce plant-based drugs - potassium permanganate for the production of cocaine and acetic anhydride for the production of heroin - have remained quite constant and are more readily controlled if a country has strong internal controls and adheres to international regulatory efforts such as the ones managed by the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB).

The reports below describe the chemical control situation in countries that are key sources of precursor chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of drugs. Afghanistan, although it remains the world’s second largest supplier of opiates, is not included due to the United

States' withdrawal of its military forces, the closure of its embassy, and the Taliban takeover in 2021. As a result, it is currently not possible to obtain reliable information on chemical controls in Afghanistan, although the United States believes it remains a significant importer of precursor chemicals from other countries in the region.

The International Framework

The UN Drug Conventions.

The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, and the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Convention) underpin the international drug policy architecture. The 1988 Convention additionally provides the legal framework for international cooperation to prevent precursor chemical diversion. Article 12 requires UN member states that are party to the Convention to monitor their international trade in the chemicals listed in Tables I and II of the Convention. These chemicals, which currently number 30, often have legitimate industrial uses, and the tables are updated to bring chemicals under international control when necessary. Under the treaty, the INCB is responsible for assisting governments in monitoring controlled chemicals and preventing their diversion. State parties are obligated to share information with one another and with the INCB on their international transactions involving these chemicals to identify and prevent diversion for illicit purposes. Article 12, Sections 8 and 9 of the Convention require licensing or similar control of all persons and enterprises involved in the manufacture and distribution of listed chemicals.

Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

The UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) is the treaty body within the international drug control framework with responsibility for deciding whether substances shall be included in the schedules or tables, and is the entity within the UN system with primary responsibility for international drug control policy. Resolutions adopted by the CND provide additional guidance to state parties, including on best practices to implement their obligations.

In 2017, the CND voted to include two of the key precursor chemicals used to produce fentanyl in Table I of the Convention: 4-anilino-N-phenethylpiperidine (ANPP) and N-

phenethyl-4-piperidone (NPP). This scheduling decision reduced the ability of illicit drug manufacturers to obtain these chemicals. However, it also led some criminals to adjust production methods, including the use of alternative chemicals that are widely available for commercial purposes and not controlled under the UN system. Illicit drug manufacturers have also turned increasingly to the use of so-called “pre-precursors” and “designer” precursors (chemicals intentionally produced to use in manufacturing scheduled precursors and evade international and domestic control measures), using more advanced processing techniques. The INCB has identified these trends as major concerns.

In 2022, the CND decided to internationally control six substances under the 1988 Drug Convention, including three fentanyl precursor chemicals (4-AP, boc-4-AP, and norfentanyl) requested for international control by the United States, extending the scope of control outlined in the Convention to those substances. In March 2024, the CND will consider recommendations by the World Health Organization to place 24 substances under international control, including two fentanyl precursor chemicals (4-piperidone and 1-boc-4-piperidone) which the United States requested be reviewed by the INCB for control under the Convention. In December 2023, the INCB recommended that both substances be placed under international control. Of note, the INCB initiated a review in 2023 of esters (compounds) of precursor chemicals simultaneously with the review of the chemicals themselves for the first time, directly responding to a recommendation of the CND in a U.S.-sponsored resolution on non-scheduled chemicals and designer precursors.

International Narcotics Control Board.

The INCB is an independent, treaty-based body responsible for assisting states in their efforts to achieve the aims of the three UN drug control treaties. Under the Convention, the INCB has a treaty-mandated function to assist governments in preventing the diversion of controlled chemicals. State parties are obligated to share information with one another and with the INCB on their international transactions involving these chemicals to identify and prevent diversion for illicit purposes. Article 12, Sections 8 and 9 of the Convention require licensing or similar control of all persons and enterprises involved in the manufacture and distribution of listed chemicals.

The INCB plays a critical role in preventing the diversion of precursor chemicals. Under the Convention, the INCB is charged with assessing precursors and making recommendations

on appropriate monitoring measures to the CND. The Board's assessment as to scientific matters is determinative, but the CND considers other relevant factors in deciding appropriate measures to adopt. Decisions of the CND are binding on parties to the Convention, which, with 191 parties, is nearly universal in its application. The United States provides funding to the INCB to carry out the measures called for in the UN conventions, and to improve detection and tracking of chemicals subject to diversion. This has included support to the Global Rapid Interdiction of Dangerous Substances (GRIDS) Programme, which uses real-time platforms to exchange operational information as well as providing practical tools to enhance international cooperation on NPS.

The INCB has implemented several programs to address the challenges of precursor chemicals:

- **The Pre-Export Notification Online system (PEN Online)** is an online database system that enables the exchange of information between member states on the import and export of chemicals for legitimate industrial uses that could be diverted for the illicit manufacture of drugs. It is the only global system for monitoring international legitimate trade in precursor chemicals controlled under the Convention and provides importing state authorities with an early alert system to verify the legitimacy of pre-export chemical shipments. Data conveyed by PEN Online, has proved very useful in both stopping suspect shipments, and facilitating intelligence with follow-up investigations leading to the dismantling of international drug trafficking networks. Since the PEN Online system was launched in March 2006, 169 governments have registered to use it. In 2023, some 2,700 notifications were exchanged every month through PEN Online. From November 2022 to November 2023 approximately 32,000 pre – export notifications were exchanged through PEN Online by 62 Governments.
- **The Pre-Export Notification Online Light system (PEN Online Light)** is a new web-based tool that INCB launched on October 17, 2022. Similar to PEN Online, PEN Online Light enables exporting government authorities to exchange, on a voluntary basis, information about planned exports of drug precursors that are not under international control but which may be nationally controlled in one or more countries or included in special surveillance lists due to their use in the illicit manufacture of drugs. This is expected to help address the growing problem of non-

controlled and designer precursors that are being used in place of controlled chemicals in the illicit manufacture of drugs. All users of the PEN Online system automatically have access to PEN Online Light. After about one year of operations, PEN Online Light has registered 725 pre-export notifications by 12 exporting to 50 importing countries. Asian and North American institutions are the most frequent users of the new system. To date, notifications have mostly reported international movements of Gamma butyrolactone (GBL) and glacial acetic acid.

- **The Precursors Incident Communication System (PICS)** is another INCB tool that facilitates real-time communication exchange among law enforcement officials worldwide. The secure online system supports intelligence sharing on seizure incidents and suspicious shipments involving precursor chemicals as well as clandestine laboratories and drug manufacturing equipment. Additionally, it facilitates direct coordination and collaboration among national authorities to advance investigations on chemical trafficking. PICS also provides authorities with information on newly emerging precursor chemicals. From November 2022 to November 2023, some 500 incidents involving 118 different chemical substances of which only 19 are under international control have been shared through PICS. The platform also recorded 14 incidents related to clandestine laboratories. As of December 1, 2023, there were a total of more than 4,500 incidents communicated through PICS since its launch. The system has more than 600 registered users from 129 countries and territories, representing more than 300 agencies.
- **The International Special Surveillance List (ISSL)** is an INCB mechanism that tracks chemicals not regulated by the Convention but for which substantial evidence exists of their use in illicit drug manufacture. The CND has urged governments to make wider use of ISSL and take voluntary measures to apply greater oversight of the supply chain of chemicals listed by it.

In 2021, the INCB hosted expert and Member State consultations to develop a list of options for global action that governments can use to address the challenge of non-scheduled chemicals and designer precursors used in the illicit manufacture of drugs. The paper included recommendations for action including legislative measures, investigative tools, and industry engagement. This initiative built on a paper submitted by the INCB to the CND in 2020, titled “Options to address the proliferation of non-scheduled chemicals,

including designer precursors – contribution to a wider policy dialogue.” In 2022, the United States sponsored a CND resolution on this issue to encourage Member States to apply the recommendations from the options paper.

In addition to PEN Online, PICS, and ISSL, the INCB coordinates multinational law enforcement task forces to monitor and intercept diverted chemicals used to illicitly manufacture drugs, specifically synthetic drugs (Project Prism), heroin and cocaine (Project Cohesion), and NPS (Project Ion). These mechanisms facilitate coordination between international law enforcement authorities for coordinating targeted, time-bound intelligence-gathering operations.

Regional Bodies.

The regulatory framework codified by the UN operates in concert with regional bodies, such as the European Union and the Organization of American States (OAS), which partner with the United States on multilateral chemical control initiatives, including the implementation of CND resolutions. The OAS Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) and its Group of Experts on Chemical Substances and Pharmaceutical Products works to advance voluntary cooperation to prevent the diversion and criminal misuse of non-controlled chemicals. Its model guidelines, published in 2019, serve to address such diversion.

Major Chemical Countries and Territories

Belgium

The law regulating Belgium’s significant chemical industry limits the production and use of many chemical precursors required for producing illegal synthetic drugs. This includes controlling all substances listed in the 1988 UN Convention Against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and controls on substances in accordance with European Union regulations. Overall, Belgium enforces robust reporting requirements for the import and export of precursor chemicals (for example, bulk pseudoephedrine/ephedrine, safrole oil, acetic anhydride, and benzyl methyl ketone). Nevertheless, Belgian authorities acknowledge that importers occasionally circumvent these restrictions by way of false or misleading labelling. The Belgian Federal Police and Belgian Customs & Excise authorities lead enforcement of

precursor chemical controls, whereas the Ministry of Safety and Public Health is responsible for regulatory control of pharmaceutical medications.

Belgium is mostly a transit country for shipments of precursor chemicals from China and India destined for clandestine synthetic drug laboratories in the Netherlands and other European countries. A small percentage of those shipments end up in illegal labs in Belgium. Belgian authorities acknowledge that continued record seizures of cocaine at the Port of Antwerp in recent years have resulted in limited targeting and interdiction of precursor chemicals.

Belize

The government has not identified or intercepted any precursor chemicals in 2023. In 2020, the “Misuse of Drugs Act” was amended to include precursor chemicals, including fentanyl. The United States provided capacity building on precursor chemical and plant identification for representatives from multiple government agencies and non-governmental organizations. The National Forensic and Science Services gave a presentation on the testing process and proper evidence packaging for precursor chemicals. In April 2023, the Customs and Excise department confiscated 98 fentanyl test strips imported from the United States through a consolidated shipment. This was the first fentanyl-related seizure in Belize.

Bolivia

Bolivia’s Controlled Substances Law, enacted in March 2017, regulates precursor chemicals in coordination with the INCB. Precursor chemicals continue to be diverted through black market channels into Bolivia for processing cocaine. While the Chemical Substances Investigations Group (GISUQ) did not share information on chemical control measures in 2023, other reporting indicates most chemicals come from Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and China.

The most common chemicals seized match those commonly found in drug factories (where base paste is prepared) and cocaine labs (where base paste is transformed into cocaine). Bolivia is both a transit country for illicit drug shipments and a source country for coca and cocaine processing. The number of labs in Bolivia that process base paste into cocaine has

significantly increased over the last 10 years. The most common chemicals found in those labs are sulfuric acid; hydrochloric acid; sodium carbonate; caustic soda; potassium permanganate and ethyl ether; phenacetin; sodium metabisulfite; activated carbon; ethyl acetate; and levamisole. The last five products were added to the list as controlled substances under Bolivian law in 2019, and GISUQ believes they are alternative chemicals that drug producers use to avoid law enforcement controls. No additional products have been added to the list since 2019. Traffickers use activated carbon to deodorize and discolor water and other liquids, and phenacetin, a highly toxic analgesic, is used to increase the volume of cocaine.

The GISUQ is charged with locating and interdicting chemicals used in the traditional cocaine process, such as sulfuric acid, hydrochloric acid, and gasoline. The GISUQ coordinates activities with the Special Force for the Fight against Narcotics Trafficking and the Vice Minister of Social Defense and Controlled Substances, which administers and licenses the commercialization and transport of controlled substances listed under Bolivian domestic law. In response to increases last year, FELCN and the Vice Ministry of Social Defense are now tracking synthetic drug seizures. As of October, six kilograms of methamphetamine, 982 doses of LSD, 68,576 MDMA tablets, and 4.2 kilograms of MDMA have been seized. The 2017 Controlled Substances Law indicates that violation of controlled substances could result in penal action against all participants and provides the legal framework for GISUQ, in coordination with other agencies, to add or eliminate chemical substances controlled under Bolivian law.

The Bolivian government does not have control regimes for ephedrine and pseudoephedrine. The GISUQ, however, coordinates with the Ministry of Health to supervise and interdict illegal commercialization of methamphetamine. In September 2016, the Ministry of Health created the State Agency of Medicines and Health Technologies to regulate the use and commercialization of synthetic drugs, but further developments have not taken place.

Brazil

Brazil is one of the world's top ten chemical producing countries. It licenses, controls, and inspects precursor chemicals, including potassium permanganate and acetic anhydride, in conformity with its obligations under the 1988 UN Drug Control Convention. The Federal

Police (PF) Chemical Division controls and monitors 146 chemical products in conjunction with 27 PF regional divisions and 97 resident offices. The Chemical Division includes a Chemical Control Division and a Criminal Diversion Investigations Unit. Both routinely coordinate and share information when conducting administrative inspections and criminal investigations.

The Brazilian National Health Surveillance Agency (ANVISA) oversees precursor chemicals used in the pharmaceutical industry, including 4-anilino-N-phenethylpiperidine (ANPP) and N-Phenethyl-4-piperidinone (NPP), which are on the list of controlled chemical substances but not banned. Regulatory guidelines require chemical handlers to be registered and licensed to conduct activities such as manufacturing, importing, exporting, storing, transporting, commercializing, and distributing chemicals. The PF uses a national computerized system of chemical control to monitor all chemical movements in the country, which requires all companies to register all precursor chemical activity, including monthly reports for all chemical related movements and existing chemical inventories. In 2023, Brazil created the National Inventory of Chemical Substances which tracks chemical substances produced or imported into Brazilian territory and classifies them according to their risks. Brazil also created three regulatory authorities to define substances prioritized for risk assessment.

Brazil reports to the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) its annual estimates of legitimate requirements for ephedrine and pseudoephedrine quantities above 10 grams, and P-2-P in any amount, using the INCB's Pre-Export Notification Online (PEN Online) system. The PF routinely uses PEN Online in cases of international trade and in coordination with UN member states to alert importing countries on details of an export transaction.

Burma

Burma does not have a major chemical industry and does not manufacture ephedrine, pseudoephedrine, acetic anhydride, or other substances used as precursor chemicals for illicit drug production. Burma's political instability, porous borders, and ongoing conflict make it difficult to accurately quantify its illicit production and export of precursor chemicals and synthetic drugs. However, both the regime and independent reporting indicate that production of synthetic drugs continued to increase in 2023. Burma's proximity to the

People's Republic of China (PRC) and India, and the absence of the rule of law, especially in conflict areas outside of the control of the military regime that seized power in a 2021 coup, allows for a continuous supply of precursor chemicals and creates an ideal environment for criminal networks to divert chemicals into the illicit manufacturing of methamphetamine and other synthetic drugs.

The regime has stated that it faces challenges in addressing the increasing inflows of illegally diverted and trafficked precursor chemicals from the PRC and the sophisticated trafficking networks that operate in areas with limited to no government control in approximately half of the country. It has also acknowledged in regional meetings on transnational crime its challenges with controlling its borders and corruption.

The Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control (CCDAC) is Burma's sole interagency coordinating mechanism for legal and illegal drug control. Under the CCDAC, the Supervision Committee for the Control of Precursor Chemicals (SCCPC) monitors the possession, use, sale, production, and transportation of chemical precursors. Burma is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention but has not implemented laws or procedures to meet all its provisions, or those of other instruments governing chemical control.

In January 2023, the regime formed a precursor regulatory group within the CCDAC and launched a nationwide campaign, "Operation 39," to counter the illicit trade and regulate 39 controlled precursor chemicals. In April 2023, SCCPC reported that it had seized seven precursor and 17 controlled chemicals within the first three months of the operation and assessed that organized crime groups were expanding the use of non-controlled chemicals to manufacture methamphetamine and other synthetic drugs, including ketamine and ecstasy. In June, the operation led to the prosecution of 312 cases related to controlled chemical offenses and helped seized over \$190 million in chemicals.

Authorities face additional challenges in controlling the illicit import and diversion of precursor chemicals, as organized crime groups are increasingly using non-controlled chemicals to produce synthetic drugs.

The regime has deployed interdiction equipment to several major checkpoints and plans to deploy similar equipment throughout the country. Official precursor seizure statistics from January to December 2023 included 1,135 kg sodium cyanide, 7,140 liters (L) hydrochloric

acid, 162,320 L acetone, 111,800 L toluene, 67,140 L benzyl cyanide, 117.8 metric tons of crystal methamphetamine, and 253.34 million methamphetamine tablets, among others.

The United States funds the UN Office on Drugs and Crime to strengthen Burma's response to precursor chemicals diversion and trafficking. The United States also supports efforts to establish a coordinated, regional response to precursor chemical diversion and trafficking, including through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Lower Mekong River Initiative.

Canada

Canada maintains strong legislative and regulatory controls over its large chemical industry. Nevertheless, the diversion of chemicals by organized criminal groups for the purpose of illicit drug production remains a problem. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police set up a National Chemical Precursor Diversion Program to address the issue. In addition, Canada's CDSA, Narcotics Control Regulations (NCR), and Precursor Control Regulations (PCR) provide a legislative framework for the control of substances and chemical precursors. Health Canada submits an annual report to the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) with respect to its obligations under the UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988.

The scheduling of precursors under the CDSA provides law enforcement agencies with the authority to act against illicit activities. The PCR authorizes Health Canada to communicate information collected to law enforcement agencies, border control officers, foreign competent authorities, and the INCB. Regulatory amendments made to the NCR and PCR in May 2019 gave the government greater control over precursor chemicals, derivatives, analogues, and salts of derivatives and analogues, to help combat the illegal production and distribution of fentanyl and amphetamines. In August 2023, the Government of Canada amended the Precursor Control Regulations to include the salts, analogues, and derivatives of 4-AP, a novel group of chemical precursors, that have been used in domestic fentanyl production in Canada.

People's Republic of China

The People's Republic of China (PRC) has implemented a licensing regime for the production, sale, and transport of drug precursor chemicals. However, due to improperly staffed and inadequately equipped PRC oversight of its massive chemical industry, which includes approximately 160,000 chemical companies, illicit drug manufacturers directly source chemicals from the PRC that facilitate drug hubs in Mexico and Southeast Asia. The National Narcotics Control Commission (NNCC) is the agency with primary responsibility for drug precursor chemical control. The PRC maintains a list of controlled precursor chemicals called the "Catalogue of Precursor Chemicals," which currently includes 38 drug precursor chemicals. This catalogue includes potassium permanganate (a precursor for cocaine), acetic anhydride (heroin), and ephedrine and pseudoephedrine (methamphetamine).

U.S. law enforcement recognizes the supply of PRC-produced drug precursors to illicit manufacture as a significant problem. U.S. law enforcement reports that the most common diversion tactic used by traffickers is the intentional mislabeling of shipments containing precursors. Perpetrators caught mislabeling precursor shipments often face only civil penalties and small fines rather than criminal charges. The challenge of preventing precursor diversion is exacerbated by the PRC's unwillingness to effectively screen the high volume of goods exported via land, air, and sea. Traffickers also skirt chemical control laws by selling and distributing chemicals that are not yet regulated by the PRC but are avenues to the production of fentanyl and methamphetamine, including on e-commerce platforms. Many PRC-based traffickers have shifted to sending non-controlled chemicals to Mexico that are one step earlier in the chemical process for making fentanyl, so-called "indirect precursors" or "pre-precursors."

The PRC in 2018 controlled 32 new substances, and in 2019 controlled fentanyl as a class. In 2021, the PRC controlled 18 new substances and synthetic cannabinoids as a class. In March 2022, the PRC voted to schedule 4-AP, in addition to 4-AP, boc-4-AP, and Norfentanyl at the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) in Vienna. In September 2023, the PRC revised the list of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances to include Tilidine in the catalog of narcotic drugs, include Imidazole and Etomidate into the Category II psychotropic drugs, and to reschedule Modafinil from a category 1 psychotropic drugs to a category 2 psychotropic drug.

In the second half of 2023, the PRC police have been publishing reports of increased management and supervision measures on precursor chemicals for synthetic narcotics. For example, police in the Jilin Public Security Bureau and the Anti-Narcotics Department reported that they have “improved management systems of precursor chemicals, such as license application procedures, annual inspections, and security inspections.” Police in Shandong province reported additional screening measures at highway inspections that are targeting “drug-making raw materials and fentanyl-like substances” on trucks with possible administrative penalties. Police in Yunnan province announced a notice enhancing regulation and enforcement of a list of unregulated precursor chemicals and equipment including pill press machines coming in or out of Yunnan.

Individuals are not often prosecuted in the PRC for the manufacture of substances used in illicit drug production, since once a substance is controlled, the market quickly adjusts to manufacture and sell non-controlled ingredients for synthetic drugs, so as to avoid harsh legal penalties associated with drug trafficking (which include capital punishment). The PRC has not taken effective measures to combat mislabeling used to traffic synthetic opioid precursors, implemented “Know Your Customer” regulations on chemical shipments, or regulated pill presses manufactured in the PRC that continue to fuel the United States’ domestic opioid crisis.

Colombia

Diversion of precursor chemicals is a serious problem in Colombia, and the government is working to address the issue. The Colombian government has tightened controls on coca-processing chemicals, though traffickers are still able to import them illicitly into Colombia and have built illicit labs to produce some precursors. Seizures decreased during the first nine months of 2023, when the police and military forces seized 26,528 metric tons (MT) of solid precursors and approximately 32.4 million liters of liquid precursors. This represents a 43 percent decrease in solid precursors and 25 percent decrease for liquid precursors compared to the same period in 2022.

The Colombian government controls the import and distribution of chemicals needed for processing coca leaves into cocaine. During the first nine months of 2023, Colombian law enforcement seized chemical substances, increasing seizures of hydrochloric acid 91 percent from 60,392 liters to 115,000 liters, acetone 39 percent from 731,614 liters to

approximately 1.02 million liters; and potassium permanganate 26 percent from 66 MT to 84 MT. Seizures of other substances decreased, such as sodium hydroxide which decreased 24 percent, from 112MT to 85 MT, and cement which decreased 43 percent, from 46,210 MT to 26,207 MT. The government limits production, distribution, and storage of precursors nationwide and prohibits gasoline and other chemicals in certain areas. Additionally, Colombian companies are not authorized to export ephedrine or pseudoephedrine in bulk form, and Colombian law bans the domestic distribution of all pharmaceutical products containing ephedrine or pseudoephedrine.

Since 2015, the government has regulated precursor chemicals used for drug production and expanded its enforcement efforts related to these chemicals. In 2015, the government began implementing the Information System for the Control of Substances and Chemical Products (SICOQ), a real-time tracking tool that the police and the Ministry of Justice developed to strengthen the control of chemicals. Since its inception, 48,312 individuals and companies that handle chemical substances and products have been registered in the SICOQ platform. Currently, 3,578 users have valid government-issued authorizations for legal use of controlled substances and chemical products.

While the Colombian government has strengthened chemical control legislation, traffickers are still able to import precursors clandestinely into Colombia. Although chemical companies require government permission to import or export specific chemicals and controlled substances, the police must prove seized chemicals were intended for illicit drug production to charge individuals with drug trafficking. Further, to bring U.S. charges against an illicit chemical trafficker, the police must prove that the trafficker had knowledge that the chemicals seized were intended to produce drugs that would end up in the United States. Additionally, traffickers and clandestine laboratories recycle controlled chemicals and are increasingly able to replace controlled chemicals with non-controlled chemicals.

The police created a special unit tasked with the interdiction of precursor chemicals. The Colombian Marines increased efforts against precursor chemicals transported via rivers by better covering riverine chokepoints - areas through which traffickers must cross to move controlled chemicals. The United States supports a dedicated enforcement group and a special investigations unit within the police anti-narcotics directorate focused on targeting the criminal organizations involved in supplying chemicals to cocaine labs. U.S. special agents, intelligence analysts, and their Colombian counterparts work in concert with

colleagues in Ecuador to interdict these chemicals in transit, thereby denying trafficking organizations, heavily armed criminal groups, and terrorist organizations the financial resources needed to expand, purchase illegal weapons, and commit attacks against the Colombian government and civilians.

Costa Rica

Costa Rica has a stringent licensing process for the importation and distribution of precursor chemicals. In 2010 it also adopted recommendations from the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB). Costa Rica has controls for Table I and Table II precursor and essential chemicals as defined in the 1988 UN Drug Convention.

Costa Rica's National Drug Plan for 2020-2024 notes the problem of production and trafficking of chemical precursors. Costa Rica has yet to seize large amounts of the substances compared to elsewhere in the region and has a low volume of imports. However, it has a robust registration process and is responsive to requests regarding suspicious shipments of precursors. The Costa Rican Drug Institute has a special unit dedicated to the control and regulation of precursor chemicals, and this unit has broad powers to monitor and respond to illegal activity.

By law, importers and businesses that handle chemical precursors or certain types of prescription drugs are required to submit monthly reports through an online tracking system. Between January and September 2023, there were 1,951 authorized import transactions, licensed to 272 registered importers of chemical precursors. The system tracks the movement of chemical precursors and solvents and generates alerts. Costa Rica did not receive any alerts during that period related to possible irregular import activity.

Ecuador

Ecuadorian law designates potassium permanganate and acetic anhydride as controlled chemicals. Buying, selling, or importing such chemicals requires the permission of the Ministry of Interior, the primary agency responsible for precursor chemical control in Ecuador. Article 219 of the Criminal Code prohibits the use of precursor chemicals to produce, manufacture, or prepare illicit substances such as cocaine or heroin, punishable by three to five years in prison.

The police's National Chemical Unit enforces the laws that govern the importation of listed chemicals, and targets organizations diverting these chemicals to criminal organizations through investigations and intelligence operations. Although the National Chemical Unit is a highly competent entity, its small size and lack of resources hinders its ability to tackle the problem on a large scale.

Ecuador has imported large quantities of potassium permanganate for at least the past decade. Potassium permanganate has many legitimate industrial uses but as the primary chemical used to process cocaine, it is a controlled chemical and requires an import license to be imported into the country. According to the Ministry of Interior, during the first nine months of 2023 Ecuador imported 82 metric tons (MT) of potassium permanganate, compared to 38 MT during the same period in 2022. Most 2023 imports of potassium permanganate originated from China, the Netherlands, and a very small quantity from Germany. During the first nine months of 2023, Ecuador also imported 20 MT of acetic anhydride, mostly from Mexico, compared to 40 MT in 2022. Traffickers also continue to smuggle liquid chemicals, including ether, from Ecuador to Colombia and Peru for cocaine processing.

El Salvador

In 1998, El Salvador regulated psychotropic drugs and other precursor chemicals, establishing regulations for all controlled substances entering El Salvador. The government issued additional regulations for psychotropic drugs and precursor chemicals in 2003. The additions included descriptions of all illegal drugs and all institutions involved in preventing the use, distribution, and prosecution of drug related crimes. The laws provide that within the first two months of every year, the National Medicine Directorate would publish a list of medications and controlled substances in El Salvador. The list published on February 28, 2023, includes 158 narcotics, 173 psychotropic drugs, 103 precursor chemicals, and 76 substances related to fentanyl with no legitimate use and no known therapeutic or scientific use.

Pharmacies that want to import or export precursor chemicals or other controlled substances need authorization from the National Medicine Directorate. Each business is required to submit an estimate of what they will import throughout a year and keep records of the controlled substances they have on hand. All controlled substances must be

prescribed by authorized medical professionals. Pseudoephedrine has been prohibited altogether in El Salvador since 2009. It cannot be imported or exported without prior approval and authorization from the National Medicine Directorate.

El Salvador has created an interagency task force to oversee regulation, identification, investigation of potential diversion, interdictions, and destruction of synthetic drugs and precursor chemicals. The team will be staffed by personnel from the National Civil Police (PNC), Customs, and the National Medicine Directorate. The PNC has shared that, in addition, they will staff a separate unit that investigates diversion of synthetic drugs and chemical precursors. The move represents a shift from a reactionary posture to a preventative one, working with industry to ensure proper storage and inventory of pharmaceuticals and precursors. The United States will work to help equip, train, and advise the team.

Germany

Germany remains the largest exporter in the world of legal pharmaceuticals by dollar value, and manufactures or sells the majority of the 33 scheduled substances under international control as listed in Tables I and II of the Drug Convention, as well as other chemicals that can be used for the illicit production of drugs.

According to its Federal Office of Statistics, Germany was the second largest exporter of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine in 2022. Its exports included 42.56 metric tons (MT) of ephedrine and its salts, almost four times the quantity of 2021 exports (10.94 MT). The total 2022 export share of ephedrine to the United States was less than one percent. Exports of pseudoephedrine and its salts in 2022 totaled 265.16 MT – an increase of 59.84 percent over 2021 – but the total export share to the United States went down to 35 percent from 57 in 2021. While Germany was a net importer of potassium permanganate (323.35 MT) and acetic anhydride (75,310.52 MT) in 2022, its exports of potassium permanganate (70.59 MT) increased by 44.15 percent over 2021, and exports of acetic anhydride (543.99 MT) more than doubled compared to 2020 (the latest data available).

Germany's highly developed chemical sector is tightly controlled through a combination of national and European Union (EU) regulations, law enforcement action, and voluntary industry compliance. The EU and Germany have taken significant steps to implement the

United Nations' (UN's) 2017 decision to control the two primary chemicals used to produce illicit fentanyl and fentanyl analogues – 4-anilino-N-phenethylpiperidine (ANPP) and N-Phenethyl-4-piperidinone (NPP). Both ANPP and NPP have been category 1 precursors since 2019 under EU regulation 2018/729. Germany's National Precursor Monitoring Act complies with EU regulations, including Regulation (EC) No 111/2005 on trade in drug precursors between EU and third countries and Regulation (EC) No 273/2004 on trade in drug precursors within the EU. Germany updated its domestic legislation in 2022 following the EU's 2020/1737 regulation amending (EC) No 273/2004 and (EC) No 111/2005. Germany's Ministry of Health reported Germany is working on bringing its domestic criminal legislation in compliance with EU Regulation 2023/196 that added N-Phenyl-N-(piperidin-4-yl) propanamid (Norfentanyl) and tert-Butyl-4-anilinopiperidin-1-carboxylate (1-boc-4-AP) to the list of category 1 controlled substances.

Germany works closely with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and is an active participant in chemical control initiatives led by the INCB, including Project Prism and Project Cohesion. U.S. authorities work closely with Germany's chemical regulatory agency, the Federal Institute for Drugs and Medical Devices, on chemical control issues and exchanges bilateral information to promote transnational chemical control initiatives.

On the law enforcement side, as of October 27, 2023, Germany reported seizures of 1.47 kg of ephedrine and 1.25 kg of pseudoephedrine in 2023, as well as 220 kg of amphetamine-containing tablets, 80 kg pure amphetamine in different forms, 23 liters of liquid amphetamine, and approximately 2.5 tons of excipients and diluents.

Guatemala

Guatemala is a party to the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. Guatemala is also a participant in the U.S.-sponsored Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats. The Government of Guatemala updated its list of controlled substances in January 2023 to the latest international standards. Prior to this update, Guatemala had not updated its list of controlled substances in ten years, leaving many fentanyl-linked precursors uncontrolled.

Under Guatemalan law, the Ministry of Health controls the import, export, and end use oversight of precursor chemicals. However, the Ministry does not have the personnel or

resources to effectively monitor this traffic. The United States signed a \$4 million program implementation letter with the Ministry of Health in September 2023 to improve its ability to track and control dangerous precursor chemicals. In the first nine months of 2023, Guatemala reported no seizures of illicit synthetic drugs or their precursors. According to Ministry of Health records, 193 kilograms of fentanyl and 128 kilograms of fentanyl precursors were legally imported into the country in the first nine months of 2023.

The Ministry of Interior oversees the destruction of seized chemical precursors under the supervision of the Public Ministry. Guatemala is on track to eliminate its 3,000 metric ton precursor chemical stockpile (mostly methamphetamine precursors) by the end of 2023. A U.S.-donated chemical incinerator was critical to this effort.

Honduras

UNODC presented its National Assessment on Capabilities for the Safe Handling and Disposal of Seized Drugs and Chemical Substances to Honduran counterparts on November 6. The assessment identified strengths and areas of improvement of five major components: legislative, technical, financial, interagency cooperation, and the strengthening of capabilities. Areas of improvement included the need for specific legislation for the final disposal of the substances, inadequate coordination amongst the different ministries and government entities to issue this specific legislation, lack of a national strategy or action plan to address drug trafficking and chemical precursors deviation, inadequate information collection and analysis of illicit crops, seizures, storage, and final disposal of substances, the need to implement environmentally-friendly and cost-efficient final disposal methods, and the need for training and strengthening of capabilities on the handling, storage, processing, and final disposal of seized chemical substances, precursors, and drugs.

The National Coalition Against Illegal Use of Precursors and Chemical Substances, formed in July 2023, has conducted various activities including a seminar for Government of Honduras recipients to raise awareness of the synthetic drug and fentanyl crisis. They hosted a seminar led by the Mexican government's Marine Secretariat on operations of drug trafficking organizations that use legally imported chemical substances to produce synthetic drugs, the fentanyl crisis being faced by the US and Mexico, and the legal actions Mexico has taken to reduce the diversion of precursor chemicals for illicit purposes. Additionally, the National Investigation and Intelligence Directorate conducted a

workshop on Synthetic Drugs, New Psychoactive Substances and Early Alert Systems led by a UNODC expert from the Global SMART Program on October 16.

Hong Kong

Hong Kong, a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (PRC), is neither a drug manufacturing nor chemical producing economy. With well-developed logistics connectivity to mainland China, one of the largest precursor chemical exporters, Hong Kong's chemical trade is mostly in the form of imports and subsequent re-export or transshipments, or for local consumption for medical and industrial use. Some precursor chemicals transshipped from the PRC are bound for Mexico and the illicit drug trade.

The Control of Chemicals (COC) Ordinance, in effect since 1996, regulates possession, manufacture, transport, and distribution of controlled chemicals. In October 2022, the COC Order 2022 added 4-anilinopiperidine, tert-butyl 4-(phenylamino) piperidine-1-carboxylate, and norfentanyl to Schedule 2 of the COC (Cap. 145), while the Hong Kong Dangerous Drugs Ordinance (DDO) Order 2022 added cannabidiol (CBD), buprenorphine, clonazepam, CUMYL-PEGACLONE, diclazepam, diphenidine, flubromazepam, isotonitazene, MDMB-4en-PINACA, and metonitazene to the First Schedule of the DDO (Cap. 134). A total of 36 substances are subject to statutory control under the COC Ordinance.

The COC Ordinance establishes a licensing regime for importers, exporters, dealers, traders, manufacturers, and handlers of designated chemicals, and applies to imports, exports, and transshipments. Permits for shipments are mandatory, as is approval for premises and containers used to store such chemicals. The maximum penalty for illicit chemical trafficking is 15 years imprisonment and a fine of \$130,000. The Controlled Chemicals Group of the Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department's Drug Investigations Bureau enforces the Ordinance.

Hong Kong does not control sales of over-the-counter medicines containing ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, but investigates reports of possible diversion or parallel trading. While Hong Kong supports global actions to prevent illicit chemical diversion, it tends to place a lower priority on cases where transiting chemicals are not themselves controlled in Hong Kong.

India

Three agencies—the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers (MCF); the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), and; the Central Bureau of Narcotics (CBN)—jointly regulate controlled chemicals used in illicit drug manufacturing. Each of these agencies has a role overseeing substances regulated under the primary anti-drug statute, the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act of 1985 (NDPS). The CBN is the central agency authorized to interact with the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) and foreign governments in supervising international transactions of regulated substances. The NDPS provides legislative framework to implement precursor chemical control obligations required by the 1988 UN Drug Convention and codifies the regulation of the manufacture of finished pharmaceutical products.

India now regulates 27 of 33 precursor chemicals scheduled in Tables I and II of the 1988 UN Convention. Of the 27 regulated chemicals, seven are classified as Schedule A, subject to the most stringent controls. Schedule A chemicals require a unique registration for sale or distribution through websites, social media, etc., under NDPS Order 2013. In October 2022 India added three additional fentanyl precursors: 4-Anilinopiperidine (4-AP), 1-Boc-4-Anilinopiperidine, and Norfentanyl under Schedule B, which regulates the export of chemicals. India also recently added the psychotropic finished drug Isotonitazene—a designer synthetic opioid without legitimate medical uses that rivals fentanyl in its potency—to the NDPS.

India continues to participate in international precursor control initiatives such as the INCB-led Project Cohesion and Project Prism. Minor molecular adjustments to chemical structure, however, can lead to the illicit production of fentanyl analogs that are not specifically covered under the NDPS. India has no class-wide control on fentanyl analogs that would automatically add them to the list of banned substances under the NDPS.

Republic of Korea

The Republic of Korea's (ROK) proximity to precursor production hubs and its large role in the logistical flow of legitimate cargo, along with its generally advanced industrial capabilities, make it attractive to criminals seeking to obtain and transship precursor chemicals. Precursor chemicals used for the manufacture of illicit drugs such as acetic

anhydride are likely imported from the United States, Japan, India, and China and then either resold within the ROK or smuggled into other countries. While acetic anhydride remains the chemical of greatest concern, there are increasing concerns about the use of legal and less monitored chemicals such as sodium cyanide to evade authorities and produce illicit drugs such as methamphetamines. The ROK imports acetic anhydride for legitimate use, such as film production, cigarette filters, and other industrial and medical applications. The ROK placed 4-anilino-N-phenethylpiperidine (ANPP) and N-Phenethyl-4-piperidinone (NPP) under regulatory control after the UN's 2017 decision to control these precursors.

The ROK's efforts to control diversion of regulated chemical precursors are largely effective. The United States and other international bodies enjoy strong cooperation from both the Korea Customs Service and Ministry of Food and Drug Safety (MFDS) when it comes to monitoring imports of potassium permanganate and chemicals used to produce amphetamine-type stimulants. ROK authorities participate in International Narcotics Control Board-coordinated monitoring and regulating taskforces, including projects Cohesion and Prism. ROK law enforcement authorities also cooperate with Southeast Asian countries to verify documents and confirm the identities of importing businesses, including by on-site inspection.

The MFDS is responsible for enforcing a 2011 law requiring manufacturers, importers, and exporters of precursor chemicals to register with the government and renew registration every two years. It also provides training and updates to Korean businesses to keep them from unknowingly exporting precursor chemicals to fraudulent importers. Smugglers exploit Korean customs and chemical regulations to hide precursor chemical shipments in containerized cargo shipments. Current regulations, which have different reporting thresholds for different chemicals, could allow smugglers to purchase multiple small quantities from different retail outlets to avoid detection and then combine them for shipment. Korean authorities work closely with U.S. counterparts to track suspect shipments.

Mexico

The Government of Mexico controls all but four chemicals listed in the 1988 UN Convention: PMK glycinate, PMK glycidic acid, APAA, and MAPA. The Mexican Health Secretariat's

Federal Commission for the Protection Against Sanitary Risk is responsible for regulating many chemicals required for illicit drug production. It works with the National Guard, Customs Agency, and Attorney General's Office to enforce the law. GOM agencies authorize permits and monitor the import of controlled precursor chemicals, but such monitoring has not significantly deterred local production of synthetic drugs. Mexico regulates both potassium permanganate (cocaine precursor) and acetic anhydride (heroin precursor).

Mexico controls six fentanyl precursor chemicals: 4-anilinopiperidine (4-AP), 4-AP dihydrochloride, propionic anhydride, propionyl chloride, N-phenethyl-4-piperidone (NPP), and 4-anilino-N-phenethyl-4-piperidine (ANPP). In 2021, Mexico published a chemical watchlist to flag dual-use chemicals to government and private sector entities. Mexico has not amended its chemical control watchlist since April 2022 when it expanded its chemical watchlist from 14 to 69 (15 fentanyl precursors, 28 methamphetamine precursors, and 26 essential chemicals). The Mexican government controls 69 chemicals on its watchlist, however, some government reports cite 72 chemicals. These controls force transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) to conceal shipments or seek chemical alternatives and they provide regulatory and law enforcement agencies a legal basis to seize these substances and file criminal or civil charges.

Netherlands

The chemical industry is one of the Dutch economy's nine "top sectors" due to the industry's size, economic impact, and expertise. The government has placed significant regulations on this industry, including on precursor chemicals, with additional regulations in effect April 1. The new regulations ban more than 100 chemical raw materials used only to manufacture illicit drugs. The government also created the Precursor Expert Group tasked with keeping the list updated with newly emerging chemical substances.

The National Police of the Netherlands (NPN) dismantled 105 synthetic drug labs in 2022, an estimated 20% increase from 2021. China remains a significant source of precursor chemicals entering the Netherlands, and since 2004 the Netherlands has had a memorandum of understanding with China regarding chemical precursor investigations. The Dutch government cooperates closely with U.S. authorities to track and disrupt the import of precursor chemicals. The ministries responsible for domestic narcotics

issues include the Ministry of Justice and Security and the Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport.

The Netherlands has strong legislation and regulatory controls over the industry through the Law for Prevention of the Misuse of Chemicals (WVMC). The chemical industry is legally obliged to report suspicious transactions. The Financial Investigation Service (FIOD) oversees implementation of the WVMC and has responsibility for law enforcement efforts targeting precursors. Customs officials monitor the production, distribution, and trade of chemicals. However, data flows between FIOD and customs are neither automatic nor fluid and may require a legislative solution to proactively share trade data.

Fentanyl is a List I substance under the Netherlands Opium Act. The prohibition of substances lies with those that are specifically listed on the Opium Act and, as a result, analogues are not fully regulated. An introduced New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) law is slated to come into force in 2024 which will require regulation of analogues. Both potassium permanganate and acetic anhydride are regulated under the WVMC, but the Opium Act can also be applied in the regulation of these substances when used to produce illegal narcotics.

Ephedrine and pseudoephedrine are not typically used for methamphetamine production in the Netherlands. Most methamphetamine is produced using the phenyl-2-propanone, aluminum, methylamine, and mercuric chloride (P2P) method, also known in the Netherlands as the benzyl methyl ketone (BMK) method. Producers in the Netherlands often use pre-precursors to manufacture P2P/BMK. The use of P2P/BMK precursors has evolved as restrictions have tightened, including transitions from alpha-phenoacetyl nitrile (APAAN) to alphaphenylacetoacetamide (APAA) and from methyl alpha-phenylacetoacetate (MAPA), to ethyl alpha-phenylacetoacetate (EAPA).

Nigeria

Nigeria has instituted a framework for regulating the handling, distribution, and manufacture of chemicals that can be used in the production of illicit drugs. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) administers this framework, particularly through its Directorate of Forensics and Chemical Monitoring and in conjunction with the Nigerian National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC), although it

confronts challenges due to insufficient staffing and limited capabilities in monitoring the nation's extensive chemical sector. The NDLEA documents and reports to the INCB all seizures of precursor chemicals.

International law enforcement agencies have noted the interception of illicit chemicals, and Nigerian authorities have confiscated illegal pharmaceuticals comprising controlled substances in several operations. Although detecting substances such as fentanyl is hindered by forensic limitations within the NDLEA, law enforcement and investigative operations led to the capture of designer drugs such as tramadol, tapentadol, methamphetamine, heroin, cocaine, and amphetamine. In the first 10 months of 2023, Nigerian drug law enforcement reported seizures and controlled undercover purchases of fentanyl from street-level distributors.

Although relatively new to Nigeria, fentanyl is gradually growing in the country's illicit drug market. The DEA-trained Sensitive Investigative Unit (SIU) and the NDLEA's Intelligence Directorate have identified and are continuing to investigate possible criminal efforts to import and distribute fentanyl.

Pakistan

In 2022, Pakistan amended its 1997 Control of Narcotics Substances Act (CNSA) to adapt to the ever-evolving nature of illicit drug manufacturing, transit, and trade. The Pakistan Ministry of Narcotics Control (MNC) and Drug Regulatory Authority (DRA) maintain overall control and oversight of the chemicals used in narcotics formulation. Given the complexities of identifying chemicals bound for nefarious purposes and perpetual budget constraints, MNC continues to adapt policy and regulation in accordance with the CNSA and its 2022 amendment to respond to developments in the illicit drug trade. MNC and DRA enforces a quota system for all chemicals entering Pakistan, controlling the type, quantity, and recipient.

In 2017, the UN decided to control the two primary chemicals used to produce fentanyl analogues: 4-anilino-N-phenethylpiperidine (ANPP) and N-Phenethyl-4-piperidinone (NPP). Since then, traffickers have adapted their approach to seek alternative precursor chemicals for fentanyl production. According to the International Narcotics Control Board, Pakistan's legal consumption of fentanyl remains minimal, and ANF reports corroborate this

assessment. Additionally, Pakistan drug enforcement agencies are aware that potassium permanganate and acetic anhydride are used in the manufacture of cocaine and heroin respectively. Other than the quota system in place, MNC works to ensure customs and law enforcement agents are aware of these chemicals and how to identify them. This focus resulted in notable seizures of acetic anhydride (1,685 liters) and ephedrine (400 kg) in 2023.

Peru

Peru has a moderately well-established framework for chemical control. It has several laws that curb the diversion of legitimate chemical imports for illicit drug production, such as Legislative Decree No. 1126, Supreme Decree No. 044-2013-EF, and Supreme Decree No. 268-2019-EF. However, Peru is not up to date on the control of all Table I substances, including several fentanyl precursors. Chemical sector entities require licenses through an electronic registration system with approximately 10,000 users. Peru's National Superintendency of Customs and Tax Administration (SUNAT) and the Forensic Bureau of the Peruvian National Police (PNP) are responsible for and capable of analyzing chemical substances, precursors and pharmaceutical products, and synthetic drugs, including new psychoactive substances.

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and DEA, Peru has yet to conduct publicly available studies to determine the production or demand for precursor chemicals in Peru. Peru has no system to identify and trace new psychoactive substances, illicit synthetic drugs, non-medical synthetic opioids, illicit amphetamine derivatives, or other substances subject to international control.

From January 2022 through December 10, 2023, Peruvian authorities reported seizing just over 620 metric tons (MT) of 72 chemical precursors, the majority of which were sulfuric acid (212 MT), acetone (308 MT), and hydrochloric acid (95 MT). Peru does not participate in the International Narcotics Control Board's project for international operations on new psychoactive substances, does not implement innovative legislation or regulatory approaches to synthetic opioids for non-medical use, and does not use the INCB's Precursor Incident Communication System (PICS).

Poland

The 2005 Act on Counteracting Drug Addiction prohibits production, import, and marketing of precursor chemicals in Poland; the State Sanitary Inspector heads enforcement. An October 2011 Memorandum of Understanding between the Chief Sanitary Inspector, National Police Commander, Customs Service Chief, and Chief Pharmaceutical Inspector divides chemical control responsibility. Poland's laws on precursor chemical controls also implement United Nations and European Union mandates, including the Act of July 20, 2018, (amending the 2005 Act on Counteracting Drug Addiction and the Act on the State Sanitary Inspection) and the Health Minister's August 21, 2019, amended regulation on the list of psychotropic substances, intoxicants, and new psychoactive substances.

The State Sanitary Inspector and State Pharmaceutical Inspector lead in implementing drug and chemical controls. The Sanitary Inspector controls category 2 and 3 drug precursors (such as potassium permanganate and acetic anhydride) and supervises manufacturing, importation, and commercial entities that handle them. The State Pharmaceutical Inspector has the same responsibilities for category 1 drug precursors (such as ephedrine and pseudoephedrine). In suspected cases of illegal precursor handling, Chief Inspectors notify the Central Bureau of Investigation Police (CBSP). The law also requires any manufacturer, importer, or distributor of pharmaceutical substances to be licensed by the State Pharmaceutical Inspector in compliance with EU-Directive 2011/62/EU.

The two most important regulatory bodies involved in the export of chemicals include the Bureau for Chemical Substances and the Main Inspectorate of Environmental Protection. The Bureau for Chemical Substance oversees the implementation of chemical regulations, ensuring compliance with national and EU chemical laws, including CLP (Classification, Labelling and Packaging) regulations. For businesses exporting chemicals from Poland, this bureau is a crucial point of contact for understanding legal obligations, particularly those pertaining to the safety and environmental impact of chemical substances.

The Main Inspectorate of Environmental Protection (GIOS) plays a significant role in monitoring and protecting the environment against harmful chemical substances and ensuring that chemical exports align with environmental safety standards by imposing restrictions or providing guidelines on those exports.

Other Polish and EU institutions may also be involved, depending on the type of chemical and its intended use. This includes the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), which provides guidelines and databases for chemical safety, and the Polish Ministry of Health, which implements regulations on chemicals that could impact public health.

Exporters of chemicals in Poland must obtain necessary permits, adhere to safety and labeling standards, and remain aware of restrictions on chemical exports to specific jurisdictions, especially those with stringent controls under their domestic frameworks.

Poland has faced challenges related to precursor chemicals used in synthetic drug production. There have been instances in which unlawfully obtained precursor chemicals intended for legal purposes were diverted for illicit drug production. Additionally, as a transit country, Poland has uncovered cases of illicit trafficking of precursor chemicals. In 2022, a Polish operation resulted in the seizure of five metric tons of BMK glycidic acid (a precursor to the production of phenylacetone, which in turn is a precursor in the illicit synthesis of methamphetamine) in transit to other destinations. Polish authorities have been working to address precursor chemical control through enhanced monitoring, intelligence sharing, and cooperation with international partners.

Poland enters information into the International Narcotics Control Board Pre-Export Notification (PEN) system for all exports and imports of drug precursors.

In Poland, key legislation regulating the trade in drugs and drug precursors are the 2005 Act on Counteracting Drug Addiction and Regulation (EC) No 273/2004 of the European Parliament on drug precursors which lists 4-anilino-N-phenethylpiperidine (ANPP) and N-Phenethyl-4-piperidinone (NPP) as controlled category 1 drug precursors and potassium permanganate and acetic anhydride as controlled category 2 drug precursors. Category 1 contains the substances that are readily convertible to controlled drugs, and subject to the strictest controls. Many of these are in Table I of the 1988 UN Drug Convention. Category 2 contains substances that are extensively used in the chemicals industry and which are also essential for drug processing (e.g., acetic anhydride and potassium permanganate for heroin and cocaine processing).

South Africa

South Africa is a leading regional importer of chemicals used in the production of illicit drugs.

South Africa has a strong infrastructure of roads and rail, telecommunication, airports, and seaports facilities, all of which are also used to transit illicit drugs, particularly cocaine, heroin, and methaqualone.

The South African Police Service (SAPS) has a trained, dedicated clandestine laboratory team, which operates under the South Africa Narcotics Enforcement Bureau (SANEB). SANEB conducted a number of operations to dismantle clandestine drug laboratories in 2023. Notable seizures include 83kg of methamphetamine concealed in pallets and shipped to Napier Port which SAPS reported would have allowed for about four million doses and had an estimated street value of \$29 million.

Ephedrine and pseudoephedrine used in South Africa to synthesize methamphetamine largely originate in Nigeria and India. South African authorities periodically report newly identified precursor substances used in illicit drug production to the INCB. South Africa also submits information on seized precursor shipments to the INCB's Precursors Incident Communication System. Controlling and analyzing the trade of precursors is mandated by the South Africa National Drug Policy, which mandates the establishment of computerized inventory control systems for scheduled chemicals and regulating and monitoring the purchase of medicines containing precursors via a registry system. Such inventory and regulatory measures have not been fully implemented, however.

U.S. law enforcement collaboration with South Africa on investigations is productive but sporadic, and U.S. authorities regularly share information on container shipments suspected of containing possible illicit materials with South African counterparts.

While some manufacturing of methamphetamine exists in South Africa, Ephedrine and pseudoephedrine used to synthesize the drug largely originate in Nigeria and India. Recent South African police seizures point to an influx of methamphetamine from Afghanistan.

DEA is working closely with SAPS CMP to develop and strengthen South Africa's SOP on chemical monitoring to include onsite inspections, records review, and precursor chemical diversion investigations.

South Africa is a member of the *Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats* and has expressed strong interest in working with the United States and international community to combat this growing problem.

Taiwan

The Taiwan Ministry of Economic Affairs Industrial Development Administration (IDA) imposes strict reporting requirements in tracking the production, distribution, sale, storage, and export/import of 25 precursor chemicals (17 items in Category A and eight items in Category B) including acetic anhydride and potassium permanganate. Formerly known as the Industrial Development Bureau (IDB), IDA was upgraded to from bureau to administration level effective September 2023. There are few cases involving the use of precursor chemicals such as acetic anhydride and potassium permanganate for cocaine and heroin production, as amphetamine-type stimulants and ketamine are more prevalent among illicit drug users in Taiwan.

Based on the latest available data, at the end of the second quarter of 2023 approximately 903 companies had reported Category A chemical-related activities (involved in reactions and becoming part of the chemical structures of narcotics, or classified as chemicals used in production of narcotics as announced by the competent authorities). IDA maintains a secure database, where companies are required to self-report chemical-related activity online. Taiwan Customs data showed that as of August 2023, 117 Taiwan companies reported trading activities of Category B chemicals (involved or not involved in reactions and not becoming part of the chemical structures of narcotics). Companies are required to self-report chemical-related activity online. Taiwan Customs data showed that as of August 2023, 117 Taiwan companies reported trading activities of Category B chemicals.

Under the Controlled Drugs Act, TFDA supervises the trade and use of finished products for pharmaceutical and scientific purposes containing ephedrine, pseudoephedrine, and other chemicals, including by end-users such as hospitals. In 2022 (latest data available), TFDA inspected 8,018 cases involving the manufacture, sale, and use of drugs subject to the

Controlled Drugs Act and found 226 violations, mainly due to administrative negligence or failure to report the balance of receipts and expenditures of controlled substances in a timely manner. The violation ratio was 2.82 percent.

Taiwan has controlled several fentanyl precursor chemicals and has also engaged in joint investigations with U.S. counterparts to target fentanyl precursor chemicals shipped from the People's Republic of China to Mexico. Between 2019 and 2021, U.S. investigators and the Taiwan Coast Guard Administration collaborated on a significant fentanyl precursor chemical investigation involving Taiwan chemical brokers and Mexican drug cartel members. As a direct result of this joint operation, in December 2020 Taiwan authorities announced the scheduling of 4-Anilinopiperidine (4-AP), a precursor chemical used in the synthesis of illicit fentanyl products. Furthermore, the Taiwan controls of 4-AP resulted in the successful prosecution of several Taiwanese chemical brokers along with the indictment of Mexican cartel members.

In the first eight months of 2023, Taiwan exported 1,290 kilograms of pseudoephedrine and its derivative salts with a market value of \$103,344, compared to zero in the same period in 2022. The trend of annual exports of pseudoephedrine, however, has been downward since 2019, followed by a rebound in August 2023. There were no exports of ephedrine or its derivative salts from Taiwan in the first eight months of 2023, as was the case in the same period in 2022. Taiwan's Food and Drug Administration (TFDA) allows exports of pseudoephedrine and ephedrine for medical purposes, but the export trend has also significantly declined in recent years.

Thailand

Thailand's domestic drug production is relatively limited, and it is not a major source country for drug precursor chemicals, but Thailand remains a significant transit country for chemicals destined for Burma, Laos, and Cambodia. Thai authorities assert that most chemicals are imported for legitimate medical or industrial purposes, but the true quantity of diverted chemicals is unknown. Thai regulatory agencies do not yet have the staff, resources, and training to conduct inspections, investigations, and audits to detect and prevent diversion.

Thailand has maintained a legal and regulatory framework for preventing the diversion of precursor chemicals since the Commodity Control Act of 1952. Additional laws include Thailand's Narcotics Act, Psychotropic Substances Act, Hazardous Substances Act, and Export and Import of Goods Act. In 2016, Thailand introduced new regulations (Order of the Head of the National Council for Peace and Order 32/2599, 2016) to monitor the import, export, production, trafficking, and possession of precursors. The Precursor Chemical Control Committee, in place since 1993, formulates national strategy on precursor chemical control. Thailand has scheduled all chemicals listed in the 1988 UN Drug Convention, in addition to many other precursor and essential chemicals not included under the Convention. Pre-export notification is conducted to mitigate diversion as required under the Convention.

In November 2022 the Thai government passed a directive tightening measures for importing sodium cyanide, benzyl cyanide, and benzyl chloride and suspended the export of these known methamphetamine precursor chemicals. This was reportedly in response to the Thai Government's urgent policy to crack down on drug trafficking following a mass shooting in Thailand. Thailand has since seized over 700 metric tons of precursor chemicals. Enactment of the directive increased chemical seizures, and the increased coordination amongst law enforcement, customs, and regulatory agencies demonstrate Thailand's commitment to implementing precursor chemical control as part of a larger drug control strategy.

United Arab Emirates

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health and Prevention, and Federal Authority for Identity, Citizenship, Customs, and Ports Security oversee the import and export of all internationally recognized chemicals. Federal Decree-Law No. 14 of 1995, amended by Federal Decree-Law No. 8 of 2016, is the primary legislation on narcotics and psychotropic substances control.

Article (89) of Drug Law No. (30) of 2021 exempts a drug user from criminal accountability if the individual voluntarily submits a request for treatment, or if a family member communicates the need for treatment. The Dubai Narcotics Prosecution Division worked to provide additional opportunities to focus on addiction recovery instead of prison sentences. This effort factors in convictions that occurred prior to Drug Law No. (30) of 2021.

Dubai Police participated in a workshop to train academic advisors on preventing narcotics abuse and the above-referenced Article 89. Participants learned how to detect signs of drug abuse and addiction, and the benefits of drug users and family members asking for treatment.

The National Rehabilitation Centre (NRC) in Abu Dhabi earned a new prestigious accredited certification in March from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime as a “Participant and Collaborative Centre,” in the discovery and analysis of traditional, manufactured, and modern narcotic drugs. The NRC earned its first such certification in 2021, becoming the first rehabilitation center in the Gulf and the Middle East to earn this recognition.

The UAE continues to focus enforcement activities on controlled substance seizures, both narcotics and synthetic substances. The UAE is seeing increased amounts of captagon, mainly believed to be transiting the country. In September, Dubai authorities seized 13 tons of captagon pills worth more than \$1 billion, found in shipping containers. UAE authorities stated that the containers were transiting the UAE for an unnamed destination.

Intergovernmental authorities in Dubai implemented the Psychological Awareness Program for incarcerated drug users. It includes a series of rehabilitation workshops and specialized addiction treatment programs. The program focuses on mental disorders and ways to cope, related behaviors and consequences, and works to correct misconceptions related to mental health. The program aims to gradually rehabilitate participants to reintegrate into their families and society.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom (UK) is not a source country for illicit drugs, but is a leading producer of precursor chemicals. The UK applies a strict regulatory regime to the production and trade of precursor chemicals, including mandatory licensing and reporting obligations. Though drug precursors have legitimate commercial uses, the UK Home Office controls them because they can be used in illicit drug production. Precursor chemicals are also imported to the UK, primarily from China, India, Germany, and the Netherlands; however, the UK is occasionally used as a transshipment point for precursor chemicals bound for countries in Africa, Central America, and Mexico. Between January 2020 and January

2022, UK authorities seized amphetamine precursors and gamma-butyrolactone (GBL), totaling approximately 2.1 tons.

The Home Office Drug Licensing and Compliance Unit is the regulatory body for precursor chemical control in the UK; however, the National Crime Agency (NCA) and the police have the responsibility to investigate suspicious transactions. Licensing and reporting obligations are required for the commercialization of listed substances, and non-compliance is a criminal offense. HM Revenue and Customs monitors imports and exports of listed chemicals. The United States and UK continue to cooperate closely in international bodies to promote global regulation of precursor chemicals.

Venezuela

Due to the Maduro regime's lack of information sharing on drug control issues writ large, the United States has little information to evaluate precursor chemical diversion or diversion control efforts. The Single National Registry of Operators of Controlled Chemical Substances (Spanish acronym RESQUIMC), which was created in 2010, is responsible for chemical control along with the National Anti-Drug Office (SUNAD) and other agencies. In 2016, the predecessor to SUNAD created the Network Against the Diversion of Chemical Substances (Network) to promote institutional cooperation to prevent the diversion of chemical substances. Annex 1 of the Organic Law Against Drugs of 2010, which establishes the mechanisms and measures of control, surveillance, and inspection for narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, as well as chemical, precursor, and essential substances, includes two lists containing 62 and 17 substances.

According to Venezuelan law, the existence and use of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, and controlled chemical substances used by the pharmaceutical industry, as well as their derivatives, salts, preparations, and pharmaceutical specialties, are strictly limited to the quantities necessary for medical treatment, the legal production of medications, or scientific investigations. In July 2016, the Ministry for Industry and Commerce declared Alpha-phenylacetoacetonitrile (APAAN) and its optical isomers to be substances subject to state control, given their links to the production of illicit drugs. In 2019, the Ministry of Industries and National Production designated the chemical substances 4 Anilino-N- Fenetilpiperdina (APP) and N-Fenetil-4-Piperidona (NPP) as

chemical substances subject to control of the state. By law, all persons handling controlled chemical substances are to register with the RESQUIMIC.

In October 2022, SUNAD reported training 96 individuals from the Network in the prevention of deviation of controlled chemical substances. In 2023, SUNAD reported training 70 people in administrative controls over fentanyl.

Major Exporters and Importers of Pseudoephedrine and Ephedrine

(Section 722, Combat Methamphetamine Epidemic Act (CMEA))

This section of the INCSR responds to the CMEA's Section 722 requirement to report on the five major importing and exporting countries of the identified methamphetamine precursor chemicals. In meeting these requirements, the Department of State and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) considered the chemicals involved and the available data on their export, import, worldwide production, and the known legitimate demand. The available data does not address illicit trafficking and production.

Ephedrine and pseudoephedrine are no longer preferred chemicals for methamphetamine production shipped to the United States, since traffickers are increasingly using substitutes or pre-precursors. The phenomenon of substitute chemicals used in methamphetamine production is particularly observed in Mexico, where the nitrostyrene method is used to produce phenyl-2-propanone (P2P), which starts from benzaldehyde and nitroethane, or from the intermediary product 1-phenyl-2-nitropropene.

Phenylpropanolamine, a third chemical listed in the CMEA, is not a methamphetamine precursor, although it can be used as an amphetamine precursor. In 2000, the FDA issued warnings concerning significant health risks associated with phenylpropanolamine. As a result, phenylpropanolamine is no longer approved for human consumption.

Phenylpropanolamine is still imported for veterinary medicines, and for the conversion to amphetamine for the legitimate manufacture of pharmaceutical products. As phenylpropanolamine is not a methamphetamine precursor chemical, and trade and production data are not available, phenylpropanolamine has not been included in this section.

The Information Handling Services (IHS) Markit's Global Trade Atlas (GTA), a commercial compendium, is the only data source on import and export available to produce the CMEA report. Given the reporting cycles by participating countries, data often lags behind one year. The most recent year for which full-year data is available is 2021. The data, including from previous years, is continually revised as countries review and revise it. GTA data analysis and a chart identifying the sources of the data are in the tables at the end of this section.

The most recent International Narcotics Control Board's (INCB) Annual Legitimate Requirements (ALR) report available is from October 2023 <https://www.incb.org/incb/en/precursors/alrs.html>. Data on exports and imports of pharmaceutical preparations containing pseudoephedrine and ephedrine are commercial and proprietary and are not available, nor is data on legitimate demand for these substances, whether in bulk or processed pharmaceutical form. Thus, this list of the top five importers does not necessarily demonstrate that these countries have the highest levels of diversion. Instead, it demonstrates the rank position of each country compared to the overall exporters and importers of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine worldwide, as reported by the GTA.

For purposes of this determination, the United States has been excluded from these lists. However, included is additional information on U.S. exports and imports of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine. During the preparation of the 2023 CMEA report as well as determination and certification, GTA data for U.S. exports and imports for both ephedrine and pseudoephedrine for calendar years 2019-2021 were updated in light of revised estimates provided by the DEA.

Overall, the accuracy of this trade data should be viewed with caution, as some countries have less sophisticated infrastructure and methodologies at their disposal than others for measuring the volume, overall trends, and commodities involved in legitimate trade. Furthermore, this data cannot accurately identify the specific trends of smuggling or diversion involving subterfuge.

The trade data source employed in this determination and certification does not reflect illicit smuggling or production around the globe that has been detected by law enforcement and other reporting. Nor does it reflect an accurate disparity between requirements and imports.

Available trade data from GTA is also silent on legitimate commercial sales of alternative precursor chemicals used in methamphetamine production, which comprise a growing proportion of chemicals used in the manufacture of methamphetamine, particularly for the U.S. market.

Thus far, the economic and compliance analyses required by the CMEA remain challenging. Often the collection and reporting of such data requires a regulatory infrastructure that is beyond the means of some governments. Further, not all countries are familiar with the methodology and data sources used by the GTA to report the final numbers, and some countries dispute the accuracy of the data. This increases the difficulty of comparing import or export totals across years.

Nevertheless, the United States will continue to urge countries in bilateral and multilateral diplomatic and technical forums to report on their licit domestic requirements for methamphetamine precursor chemicals to the INCB. The United States will also continue to work with the INCB and with authorities in the reporting countries to secure explanations for anomalies between reported imports and reported licit domestic requirements, and to follow the development of other chemicals used in the production of methamphetamine.

CMEA Trade Data. Top Five Exporting Countries or Economies, and the United States

Table 3: Ephedrine 2020-2022 (GTA Annual Series Ending Dec 2022)

Reporting Country	Unit	2020 Quantities	2021 Quantities	2022 Quantities
India	kg	77,296	47,728	56,251
Germany	kg	18,828	10,185	50,620
Czech Republic	kg	20	3,310	6,510
Singapore	kg	3,776	3,525	1,750
People's Republic of China	kg	1,205	1,204	867

Top Five Total	kg	101,125	65,952	115,998
United States (GTA)	kg	61	429	114
United States (DEA)	kg	1.6	1.9	2.6

Analysis of Export Data:

The top five exporters of ephedrine in 2022 were again India, Germany, Czech Republic, Singapore, and the People's Republic of China (PRC). According to the Global Trade Atlas (GTA) database, ephedrine exports increased 75.88 percent in 2022 compared to 2021, mainly due to a substantial increase in exports from India, Germany, and Czech Republic. In 2022, India's exports increased by 17.86 percent from 47,728 kg in 2021 to 56,251 kg in 2022. India continues to rank as the top global exporter of ephedrine for this year's report. Germany's exports also increased from 10,185 kg in 2021 to 50,620 kg in 2022, a 397 percent increase. In both cases, the reason for such increases is unknown. Czech Republic appears this year in third place with an increase on its exports from 3,310 kg in 2021 to 6,510 kg in 2022, a 96.67 percent increase. Singapore and the PRC appear again as top exporters of ephedrine and have each decreased their levels of exports as compared with the previous year – in the case of Singapore going from 3,525 kg in 2021 to 1,750 kg in 2022, representing a 50.35 percent decrease, and in the case of the PRC from 1,204 kg in 2021 to 867 kg in 2022, representing a 27.99 percent decrease respectively. In both instances the reason for such decreases is unknown.

According to the most current information provided by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), U.S. exports of ephedrine were 1.6 kg in 2020, 1.9 kg in 2021, and 2.6 kg in 2022. For the purposes of this report, the State Department has relied on the data provided by DEA.

Table 4: Pseudoephedrine 2020-2022 (GTA Annual Series Ending Dec 2022)

Reporting Country	Unit	2020 Quantities	2021 Quantities	2022 Quantities
India	kg	360,282	260,897	451,854
Germany	kg	278,301	161,656	263,640

Singapore	kg	18,648	18,876	28,868
Switzerland	kg	44,540	46,540	27,227
Denmark	kg	7,580	6,030	12,220
Top Five Total	kg	709,351	493,999	783,809
United States (GTA)	kg	223	72	5,782
United States (DEA)	kg	12,622	2,438	9,241

Analysis of Export Data:

According to the GTA database, the aggregated volume of worldwide exports of pseudoephedrine from the 2022 top five exporters increased from 493,999 kg in 2021 to 783,809 kg in 2022, representing a 58.66 percent increase. The top five exporters of pseudoephedrine in 2022 were again India, Germany, Singapore, Switzerland, the PRC, and Denmark. India, Germany, Singapore, and Denmark increased their pseudoephedrine exports in 2022 from 260,897 kg to 451,854 kg, 161,656 kg to 263,640 kg, 18,876 kg to 28,868 kg, and 6,030 kg to 12,220 kg, or a 73.19 percent, 63.09 percent, 52.93 percent, and 102.65 percent increase, respectively. The reason for such increases is unknown. Switzerland's exports decreased between 2021 and 2022 from 46,540 kg to 27,227 kg, a 41.50 percent increase. The reason for such decrease is also unknown.

According to the most current information provided by the DEA, the United States increased its pseudoephedrine exports from 2,438 kg in 2021 to 9,241 kg in 2022, a 279 percent increase.

Table 5: Ephedrine 2020-2022 (GTA Annual Series Ending Dec 2022)

Reporting Country	Unit	2020 Quantities	2021 Quantities	2022 Quantities
Romania	kg	100	3,201	63,210
Republic of Korea	kg	33,001	3,502	36,903
Indonesia	kg	6,385	5,981	3,758

Czech Republic	kg	300	3,800	3,260
Germany	kg	10,686	12,280	2,710
Top Five Total	kg	50,472	28,764	109,841
United States (GTA)	kg	30,136	33,566	21,931
United States (DEA)	kg	2,156	2,061	2,507

Analysis of Import Data:

According to the GTA database, the aggregated amount of ephedrine imported by the top five countries and economies in 2022 was 109,841 kg, an increase compared to 2021 of 281.87 percent. The reason for such increase is unknown. The top five ephedrine importers in 2022 were Romania, Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Czech Republic, and Germany. Romania, the top ephedrine importer in 2022, had an 1,874.69 percent increase in ephedrine importation from 3,201 kg to 63,210 kg. The reason for such increase is unknown. The Republic of Korea also experienced an increase in its ephedrine importation, of 953.76 percent increase. The reason for such increase is also unknown. On the other hand, Indonesia, the Czech Republic and Germany have decreased their ephedrine importation. Indonesia went from 5,981 kg in 2021 to 3,758 kg in 2022, a 37.77 percent decrease. The Czech Republic went from 3,800 kg in 2021 to 3,260 in 2022, a 14.21 percent decrease. In the case of Germany, it went from 12,280 kg in 2021 to 2,710 in 2022, a 77.93 percent decrease. In the three cases, the reason for such decreases is unknown.

According to the most current information provided by DEA, U.S. ephedrine imports increased from 2,061 kg in 2021 to 2,507 in 2022, a 22 percent increase.

Table 6: Pseudoephedrine 2020-2022 (GTA Annual Series Ending Dec 2022)

Reporting Country	Unit	2020 Quantities	2021 Quantities	2022 Quantities
Turkey	kg	35,675	14,884	54,587
Egypt	kg	3,926,530	37,949	49,900
Indonesia	kg	30,088	25,471	47,439

Republic of Korea	kg	26,431	11,750	42,301
Switzerland	kg	59,913	55,440	35,106
Top Five Total	kg	4,078,637	145,494	229,333
United States (GTA)	kg	123,504	11,755	107,061
United States (DEA)	kg	121,640	100,292	116,045

Analysis of Import Data:

According to the GTA database, the quantity of pseudoephedrine imported by the top five importers has slightly increased in 2022. The aggregated amount of pseudoephedrine imported by the top five economies in 2022 was 229,333 kg, a 57.62 percent increase compared to 2021. Turkey, Egypt, Indonesia, and Republic of Korea increased their pseudoephedrine importation in 2022. Turkey's imports increased from 14,884 kg in 2021 to 54,587 kg in 2022, a 266.75 percent increase. Egypt, Indonesia, and Republic of Korea increased their imports from 37,949 kg in 2021 to 49,900 kg in 2022, 25,471 kg in 2021 to 47,439 in 2022, and 11,750 kg in 2021 to 42,301, a 31.49, 86.25, and 260 percent increase. In all four cases, the reason for such increases is unknown. Switzerland was the only importing country decreasing its pseudoephedrine imports in 2022. It went from 55,440 kg in 2021 to 35,106 kg in 2022, a 36.68 percent decrease. The reason for such decrease is unknown.

According to the most current information provided by DEA, U.S. imports increased from 100,292 kg in 2021 to 116,045 kg in 2022, a 16% percent increase. It should be noted that the United States no longer bulk manufactures pseudoephedrine.

Fentanyl

Section 489(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 - Fentanyl

The following is provided pursuant to Section 489(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2291h(a)), as amended by section 6610 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022 (FY 2022 NDAA), requiring a separate section in the INCSR identifying countries that are “the most significant sources of illicit fentanyl and fentanyl analogues significantly affecting the United States during the preceding calendar year,” and providing other specified information as described below. The Department of State, in consultation with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and other relevant agencies, has identified Mexico as the most significant country of import of fentanyl and fentanyl analogues significantly affecting the United States during the preceding calendar year. The following describes Mexico’s cooperation with the United States, utilization of scheduling or other procedures for illicit drugs, actions to prosecute individuals involved in the illicit manufacture or distribution of controlled substance analogues, and registration requirements or other similar measures for tableting machines and encapsulating machines.

(A) Significant source countries for fentanyl and fentanyl analogues: Consistent with Section 489(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2291h(a)), as amended by section 6610 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022 (FY 2022 NDAA), the Department of State consulted the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, the Department of Homeland Security’s Customs and Border Protection, and other relevant agencies to estimate the most prevalent source countries of illicit fentanyl and fentanyl analogues trafficked into the United States. Based on seizure data and law enforcement investigation information, the consensus among U.S. authorities is that Mexico was the only significant source of illicit fentanyl or fentanyl analogues trafficked into the United States in 2023.

(B) Cooperation with the United States: The United States and Mexico adopted the U.S. - Mexico Bicentennial Framework for Security, Public Health, and Safe Communities during the 2021 High-Level Security Dialogue (HLSD). The Framework continues to guide bilateral security assistance and collaboration. The Bicentennial Framework established three lines of effort: Protect Our People, Prevent Transborder Crime, and Pursue Criminal Networks. Activities and donations take place under the Bicentennial Framework to broaden security

cooperation, including disrupting production and trafficking of synthetic drugs such as fentanyl.

Under the Framework, both countries created a bilateral working group to identify and take actions to prevent and disrupt the illicit production and trafficking of fentanyl (and other synthetic drugs) from Mexico to the United States. Both countries address fentanyl through cooperation under the Trilateral Fentanyl Committee and the North American Drug Dialogue. In October 2022, both countries concluded a synthetic drug action plan to improve regulatory coordination, information sharing, and training to reduce fentanyl production and precursor chemical diversion. During the 2023 HLSD, the United States and the Mexican government agreed to strengthen implementation of the synthetic drug action plan.

Through training, equipment donations, technical assistance, and awareness efforts, the United States continues to strengthen Mexico's ability to track and analyze chemical imports and exports to support interdiction efforts. The United States collaborates with the Mexican Navy (SEMAR) to strengthen port control and security as well as clandestine lab identification and dismantling. In August 2023, the United States, alongside SEMAR and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, launched the Container Control Program in Manzanillo, the country's busiest commercial port, to strengthen container analysis, detection, and interdiction efforts.

The United States also promotes Mexico's ability to seize fentanyl, its precursors, and other potentially hazardous substances through training, equipment donations, and raising awareness. The United States supports Mexican forensic laboratories in analyzing chemical substances to enhance criminal investigations and prosecutions involving synthetic opioids. The United States provides training to border and security officials to identify and treat victims of potential fentanyl overdoses through first aid trainings. The United States also assists Mexico's Federal Commission for the Protection Against Sanitary Risk (COFEPRIS) to issue electronic permits and track the international import and export of precursor chemicals through the National Drug System.

The Mexican government seized 1,847.8 kilograms (kg) of fentanyl in the first eight months of 2023, a 17.8-percent increase from the same period in 2022. Mexico continued to target suspected fentanyl labs, facilities producing fentanyl-laced counterfeit pills, and fentanyl in

transit in 2023. U.S.-donated canines assisted in significant seizures of illicit drugs in Mexico in 2023, including fentanyl and its precursors. During the first eight months of 2023, donated canines assisted in the seizure of 27.02 kg of fentanyl powder and 2,937,218 fentanyl pills. The United States is working with Mexico's Attorney General's Office (FGR) and other agencies, including military units that perform counternarcotics work, to create judicial records of seizures and establish protocols for reporting to a central database to improve investigations and prosecutions.

Mexico engages with Canada and the United States in 1) the North American Drug Dialogue to foster drug policy cooperation, and 2) the North American Maritime Security Initiative to share information, improve response to transnational threats, and develop protocols for maritime interdictions. Mexico is a voting member of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs and coordinates with the United States on international scheduling decisions.

(C) Controlled substances scheduling procedures: Under U.S. law, the Drug Enforcement Administration's authority to schedule substances on an emergency basis fall under Title II of the Controlled Substances Act. Mexico has comparable capacity to schedule new psychoactive substances under its domestic framework. Mexico's Interagency Synthetic Drug Control Technical Working Group – comprising multiple federal agencies – proposes substances for control to the cabinet-level General Health Council, which formally publishes the updated list of controlled substances in the Official Gazette (Diario Oficial). Mexico's "Precursor Chemicals" list is similar to the U.S. List I designation and requires permit approval for imports, while the "Essential Chemical" list is like the U.S. List II designation and requires only notification of imports.

Mexican laws regulate the production and use of many chemicals required for illicit drug production. COFEPRIS is responsible for regulating precursor and essential list chemicals. It works with SEMAR, the National Guard, Customs (ANAM), and FGR to enforce the law. Mexico controls all but two chemicals listed in the 1988 UN Convention. Norfentanyl and boc-4-AP were added to the 1988 UN Convention tables at the March 2022 UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs. Mexico controls six fentanyl precursor chemicals: 4-anilinopiperidine (4-AP), 4-AP dihydrochloride, propionic anhydride, propionyl chloride, N-phenethyl-4-piperidone (NPP), and 4-anilino-N-phenethyl-4-piperidine (ANPP). In 2021, Mexico published a chemical watchlist to flag dual-use chemicals of concern to government

and private sector entities to reduce diversion to illicit drug production. In April 2022, Mexico expanded its chemical watchlist from 14 to 72 (15 fentanyl precursors, 28 methamphetamine precursors, and 26 essential chemicals).

(D) Steps to prosecute individuals involved in illicit manufacture or distribution of controlled substances: The Mexican government has the authority to prosecute individuals involved in the illicit manufacture or distribution of controlled substance analogues. Mexico is a party to the 1961 UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs as amended by the 1972 Protocol, the 1971 UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and the 1988 UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, and in accordance with its obligations under those convention, has laws in place comparable to that of the United States that criminalize trafficking in controlled substances. Mexico's legislation enabling criminal prosecution of controlled substances is under Federal Criminal Code, Title Seven, Chapter 1, which criminalizes criminal conduct related to narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, and other substances provided for in the General Health Law Title 12, Chapters 5 and 6.

(E) Requirements to register tableting machines and encapsulating machines: Similar to the United States, Mexico requires documentation on the importation of tableting and encapsulating machines under Chapter 3, Article 17 of the Federal Law for the Control of Chemical Precursors, Essential Chemicals and Machines to Prepare Capsules, Tablets and/or Tablets. This law provides for the Economy Secretariat to implement control and verification measures pertaining to all persons or entities that produce, dispose of, acquire, import, export, and/or store tableting and encapsulating machines (as well as precursor chemicals) to prevent their diversion for illicit drug production. On an annual basis, pill press owners are responsible for reporting the status of the press to the applicable government institution (the Economy, Health, or Communications and Transportation Secretariats).

The Mexican government does not consistently acknowledge production of illicit fentanyl in Mexico despite seizures of chemical precursors and finished fentanyl in Mexico and along the U.S.-Mexico border. Strong cooperation for narcotics control exists under the Bicentennial Framework, however the volume of illicit and dangerous narcotics entering the United States remains high. Criminal groups continue to profit from the drug trade and foment violence on both sides of the border while the lack of a comprehensive and

adequately resourced fentanyl strategy and investment into security and justice sector institutions challenge progress. The United States will continue to press the Mexican government on more aggressive action to disrupt the production and trafficking of illicit fentanyl and support Mexican efforts through capacity building and law enforcement cooperation under the Bicentennial Framework.

Synthetic Drugs and New Psychoactive Substances

U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

Section 489(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 – Synthetic Drugs and New Psychoactive Substances (NPS)

The following is provided pursuant to Section 489(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2291h(a)), as amended by section 5555 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (FY 2023 NDAA), requiring additional reporting in the INCSR on covered synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances. It requires (in summary) reporting on countries significantly involved in the manufacture, production, transshipment, or trafficking of synthetic drugs, as defined in the Act, to include (to the extent possible to determine) the scale of production, law enforcement assessment of lab capacity, methods of synthesis, and country's policies to regulate licit manufacture and interdict illicit manufacture. It further requires, with respect to governments' responses to NPS, to report to the extent practicable on governments which have articulated policies on scheduling NPS and the impacts of those policies.

The Department of State has identified the countries listed below as those that may be significantly involved in the manufacture, production, transshipment, or trafficking of synthetic drugs.

Introduction

Synthetic opioids remain the primary drug threat to the United States and a significant global threat as well. In 2022, provisional data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicated that more than 68 percent of the reported 107,000 drug overdose deaths in the United States involved synthetic opioids, principally illicitly manufactured fentanyl.

Although opioids are still legally prescribed in the United States to treat severe pain, when illicitly manufactured opioids are mixed with heroin or cocaine or added to counterfeit tablets, they are often ingested unknowingly, with deadly results. Further, synthetic drugs are easy and inexpensive to produce. There is no need for large or elaborate infrastructure; a lab can be set up in one's home and synthetic drugs are often easily trafficked through the mail. They are sufficiently potent that even small amounts can be fatal.

Almost no fentanyl or fentanyl analogues have been detected directly entering the United States from the People's Republic of China (PRC) since the PRC implemented controls over fentanyl-related substances as a class in 2019. Production of most illicit fentanyl and fentanyl analogues detected in North America has since shifted to Mexico, although the precursor chemicals required to produce fentanyl still largely originate in the PRC. Mexican criminal organizations produce fentanyl in both powder form and pressed into pills that are counterfeited to resemble licit prescription pills and, less frequently, into unmarked pills. Many precursor chemical sales in the PRC are apparently legal, involving chemicals not controlled by the PRC or under the UN framework, but are purchased for the purpose of illicitly manufacturing fentanyl.

Fentanyl and fentanyl analogues are the most common synthetic opioids seized by U.S. authorities. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has continued to seize record quantities of fentanyl each year and the Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection seized over 9,553 kilograms (kg) of fentanyl from January 2023 to October 31, 2023, a 51 percent increase over the same period in 2022.

NPS also pose a significant threat. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) defines NPS as "substances of abuse, either in a pure form or a preparation, that are not controlled by the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs or the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, but which may pose a public health threat." The term "new" does not necessarily mean newly developed, but refers to new uses, or to substances that have recently become available on the market. Such substances mimic the effects of those that are under international control such as cannabis, cocaine, heroin, LSD, MDMA (ecstasy), or methamphetamine. As of August 2023, over 1,200 NPS had been reported to UNODC. Most are stimulants, and there has been a significant increase in synthetic opioids in recent years.

With respect to reporting on NPS, the Department has limited access to information aside from information obtained from foreign governments and its engagement with international drug control entities such as UNODC and the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB). The Department will defer to appropriate agencies – e.g., the Office of National Drug Control Policy, the DEA, the Department of Justice, and/or the Department of Homeland Security – to provide information on U.S. domestic drug control policy.

Countries Significantly Involved in The Manufacture, Production, Transshipment, or Trafficking of Synthetic Drugs

Afghanistan

The United States has not had a presence in Afghanistan since the Taliban takeover in August 2021, thus independent verification of Taliban claims on seizures and enforcement activities are difficult to obtain. Seizure data from neighboring countries demonstrates continued methamphetamine production in Afghanistan, but the scope of its production has not been verified. Reports indicate ephedrine labs have moved to remote mountainous areas, but verification efforts are limited to satellite imagery. There is debate over whether the bulk of Afghanistan's methamphetamine is produced using the naturally occurring ephedra plant, ephedrine originating from pharmaceutical products like cold medications, or bulk industrial-grade ephedrine/pseudoephedrine diverted from licit markets or smuggled into the country.

Belgium

Belgium's policies to regulate licit manufacture and disrupt illicit manufacture of synthetic drugs follow the European Union's (EU) uniform system for handling the import, export, and transit of goods (the Union Customs Code, UCC) and Belgium's implementation of these policies for licit goods is effective. Belgian law and regulations prohibit the sale, possession, import, export, and manufacture of illicit synthetic drugs. The customs implementation of policies for illicit goods is primarily focused on shipments of very large quantities received from outside the EU. Far more customs resources are devoted to the large volume of cocaine seizures, leaving Belgium less able to focus on smaller or individual shipments of synthetic drugs.

Since 2002, Belgium has included NPS on its list of controlled drugs. Belgium regularly adds to the list as new substances emerge and the threat evolves. This includes continually adding various synthetic cannabinoids and cathinones.

Belgium has disrupted both mid-sized and large-scale methamphetamine labs, usually found close to the Dutch border. For other synthetic drugs, Belgium also reported

dismantling small-scale ketamine laboratories and N,N-dimethyltryptamine (DMT) production sites. Law enforcement entities continue to report finding dumping sites for drug production waste and equipment.

Belgium is a member of the U.S.-led Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats.

Burma

The porous land borders that Burma shares with the PRC and India, two of the world's largest pharmaceutical and chemical producing countries, magnify the number of routes through which the chemicals used to produce synthetic drugs are smuggled into the country. Burma's proximity to these countries and the absence of the rule of law, especially in conflict areas outside of the control of the post-2021 coup military regime, allows for a continuous supply of precursor chemicals and creates an ideal environment for criminal networks to divert chemicals into the illicit manufacturing of methamphetamine and other synthetic drugs.

Drug syndicates are expanding their use of non-controlled substances to produce methamphetamine and its precursors in Burma. According to a 2023 UNODC report on synthetic drugs, organized crime groups use social media and online sales platforms to trade non-controlled chemicals used in the synthetic drug production process. Law enforcement information indicates that production and trafficking of ketamine in Burma is increasing.

Examples include a record seizure at a checkpoint in Mandalay region in August 2023. Burma's Drug Enforcement Division (DED) seized over 3 metric tons of crystal methamphetamine and 31 million methamphetamine tablets (known in Thai as "yaba"), worth over \$50 million.

In June 2023, UNODC reported that methamphetamine produced in Burma's Shan State was trafficked to neighboring countries, other ASEAN members, Australia, and New Zealand.

In determining the chemical profile of seized drugs, the main challenges for Burma's law enforcement are interagency coordination, capacity of law enforcement personnel, and forensic capacity. The DED has a limited supply of test kits used to identify new

psychotropic substances and primarily relies on software updates to U.S. government chemical scanners originally supplied to the previous civilian government.

Canada

Canada's Royal Canadian Mounted Police Serious and Organize Crime & Border Integrity Unit

has identified fentanyl production within Canada, stating that the majority is being trafficked to Australia and New Zealand, and also within Canada for domestic consumption. In 2023, U.S. CBP seized 1.4 kilograms of fentanyl at the U.S. northern border. U.S. law enforcement has stated there is no evidence that Canada is trafficking vast amounts of fentanyl to the United States, and that most Canadian-produced fentanyl is for domestic consumption. Transnational criminal organizations in Canada receive the bulk of fentanyl precursor chemicals from the PRC, which are being imported through consolidated shipments within commercial air cargo.

In October 2023, the U.S. Department of the Treasury sanctioned Vancouver-based company Valerian Labs and its head, Canadian national Bahman Djebelbak, for receiving shipments of methylamine hydrochloride, a precursor chemical used to produce methamphetamine and MDMA, from a PRC based company and attempting to procure chloroform, dichloromethane, and iodine, substances used in the production of fentanyl, heroin, and methamphetamine. The Canadian Border Services Agency estimated that 98 percent of Canada's fentanyl-making materials seized in western Canada originated in the PRC. In the past year, Canadian law enforcement conducted several high-profile raids on fentanyl labs in British Columbia, Alberta, and Ontario. In April 2023, the Vancouver Police Department raided a fentanyl super lab that possessed approximately \$5.9 million in illicit drugs. In August 2023, police in Ontario dismantled a large network of opioid producers through Project Odeon in the Greater Toronto Area. In November 2023, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in British Columbia raided a large fentanyl lab and seized 2.5 million doses of fentanyl.

Canada is also the world's second largest consumer of prescription opioids per capita. The Public Health Agency of Canada reported 1,905 opioid-related deaths between January and March 2023. Health Canada highlighted multi-drug toxicity as a contributing factor to the

opioid crisis, as 48 percent of overdose deaths during the same period in 2023 involved a stimulant. Fentanyl and its analogues are listed as Schedule I drugs under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (CDSA). In May 2023, Parliament amended the CDSA to streamline the process for communities that want to open supervised consumption sites; prohibited the unregistered importation of designated devices such as pill presses and encapsulators that may be used in the illicit production of controlled substances; and, in order to stop illicit trafficking of substances such as fentanyl through the mail system, amended the Customs Act to remove an exception that prevented border officers from opening mail weighing 30 grams or less. Parliament also allowed for the temporary scheduling of controlled substances and faster disposition of drugs and substances by law enforcement under the CDSA.

In 2022, the latest year for which data are available, Health Canada's Drug Analysis Service identified 29 NPS. In total, Canada identified eight hallucinogens, seven sedatives/hypnotics, five stimulants, four cannabinoids, two dissociatives, two opioids, and one other substance. Benzodiazepine desalkylgidazepam emerged as the most commonly identified NPS, which is normally used as a treatment for anxiety, alcohol withdrawal, and migraines. Out of the 29 NPS, 19 of them are controlled under the CDSA and one NPS, medetomidine, is regulated under the Food and Drugs Act and Regulations and is approved for veterinary use only.

Canada is a member of the U.S.-led Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats.

People's Republic of China

There has been an overall decline in the overall scale of drug use in the PRC according to the PRC's National Narcotics Control Commission (NNCC). The PRC also reports reductions in the use of heroin, methamphetamine, and ketamine. However, the NNCC notes that there has been a diversification in drug use and increased use of NPS, fluoroketamine, and synthetic cannabinoids, as well as other psychotropic substances such as tramadol and diclazepam. In addition to an increase in domestic consumption of NPS, PRC-based entities continue to produce these substances. According to the U.S. DEA, most NPS seized in North America and Europe is produced in the PRC.

In May 2019, the PRC took the important step of controlling all fentanyl-related substances as a class. This significantly reduced the amount of fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances being shipped from the PRC to the United States. The NNCC has made no statements about the scale of fentanyl consumption within the PRC, or seizures of fentanyl or fentanyl-related substances in the PRC, and PRC authorities continue to stress publicly that fentanyl use and distribution are not domestic concerns in China. However, despite the reduction in the volume of finished fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances being shipped from the PRC, fentanyl precursor and pre-precursor chemicals remain an area of concern.

The PRC is one of the world's top producers and exporters of precursor chemicals. According to various estimates, between 160,000 and 400,000 companies in the PRC are capable of supplying precursor chemicals for legitimate commercial use as well as illicit drug production. Precursor chemicals produced in the PRC are used to produce illicit drugs around the world, including opium, heroin, ketamine, and methamphetamine in Asia, Latin America, and Mexico. Illegally operating pharmaceutical companies in the PRC produce a large proportion of the world's counterfeit medicine, including fentanyl. Due to the volume of these precursor shipments, the United States designated the PRC as a Major Drug Transit or Drug Producing Country on September 15, 2023.

The PRC's enforcement of its fentanyl regulations remains opaque. PRC law enforcement agencies have emphasized that they are unable to act against companies selling non-scheduled fentanyl precursors, even when it is known that those companies are illegally diverting chemicals to drug cartels. As a result, there is significant room for further U.S.-PRC counterdrug cooperation, especially as regards precursor chemical production. The PRC's November 2023 notice to its domestic industry advising on the enforcement of laws and regulations related to trade in precursor chemicals and pill press equipment addressed both scheduled and non-scheduled precursors, and it outlined the responsibilities of shipping and delivery companies. The notice also cautioned against the sale of chemicals not scheduled in the PRC to the United States and Mexico. In tandem with this policy update, the PRC began taking law enforcement action against synthetic drug and chemical precursor suppliers. And for the first time in nearly three years, the PRC re-started submitting incidents to the INCB's global IONICS database, which is used to share real-time information internationally about suspicious shipments and suspected trafficking. It will take sustained implementation of such actions, along with coordinated U.S.-PRC and multilateral

efforts, to combat the trafficking of synthetic opioid precursor chemicals and equipment for illicit narcotics production.

India

According to the 2022-2023 Annual Report of the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, India ranks third in the world for pharmaceutical production by volume, and its pharmaceutical industry generates \$42 billion in annual sales. According to Government of India data, 500 manufacturers of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) produce over 60,000 generic brands across 60 therapeutic categories in India.

The scope and scale of illicit synthetic drug production in India is difficult to quantify due to a lack of data, although authorities have made a number of arrests and seizures. In 2023 India detected clandestine laboratories manufacturing heroin, LSD, methamphetamine, and mephedrone. The government also discovered illicit manufacturing of controlled pharmaceuticals such as alprazolam in remote areas. The Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad discovered a mephedrone production laboratory from which the finished drug was prepared for export to foreign markets.

India has made strides to facilitate centralized oversight of entities handling pharmaceuticals and chemicals using technology and digital portals. In 2022, the Central Bureau of Narcotics issued a public notice stating that exports of precursor chemicals would be licensed only if the quantity exported was within the Annual Legitimate Required (ALR) published by the INCB for the importing country.

India is a signatory to multiple United Nations (UN) conventions and strives for parity with UN members on substances recommended for inclusion. The time necessary to schedule NPS is lengthy, however, and the substances often remain readily available. In 2023, several NPS were observed on business-to-business platforms hosted in India, including isotonitazene (nitazene or “ISO”), a synthetic opioid scheduled by India in September 2022. International demand for NPS, combined with the ease of web-based commerce, render control policies and efforts particularly difficult.

India is a member of the U.S.-led Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats.

Indonesia

Indonesia imports the majority of the raw ingredients used by the pharmaceutical sector. Pending legislation aims to transform the health care system in Indonesia, to include prioritizing local ingredients and/or preparation of pharmaceuticals. Drugs, drug substances, and related raw materials must meet Indonesian and international pharmacopeia standards and requirements.

The National Narcotics Board (BNN) has not published data for 2023 but acknowledges the continued increase in seizures and dismantling of domestic methamphetamine production sites. To date, however, all seizures of clandestine methamphetamine labs in Indonesia have been smaller-scale kitchen-sized laboratories with no known major precursor chemicals found on site.

As of August 2023, Indonesian authorities tested 11,517 samples in its forensic laboratories. Synthetic cannabinoids made up 43 percent of the samples, followed by synthetic cathinones (25 percent) and phenethylamines (16 percent). The two main precursors from the analyzed samples of methamphetamine were 1-Phenyl-2-propanone (P2P) using the Leuckart and Reductive Amination method, and ephedrine/pseudoephedrine using the Nagai, Moscow, Rosenmund, Birch Reduction, Hypo and Emde methods. In May, BNN identified a new NPS, fluorexetamine, in the phencyclidine group.

Indonesia launched a National Early Warning System (EWS) in August 2023, with BNN as the focal point to collect, analyze, and share information provided by EWS stakeholders. The EWS provides data on NPS identified in the region, modes of discovery of new NPS, and details on dangerous additional ingredients and unusual concentrations. The EWS aims to inform the public about NPS, new discoveries, and dangerous substances or side effects at elevated concentrations.

Indonesia is a member of the U.S.-led Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats.

Kazakhstan

While there is legal domestic pharmaceutical production in Kazakhstan, there are no government reports on the diversion of legitimate pharmaceutical supplies to illicit supply

chains. At the same time, independent pharmacies may sell narcotic-containing medications, such as pain relievers, or medications that enhance the action of synthetic drugs without a prescription.

Law enforcement agencies are concerned about the expanding size of illegal synthetic drug manufacture and lab capabilities. The country's clandestine laboratories are not only proliferating, but also becoming more sophisticated. Seventy-four clandestine laboratories were seized in the first nine months of 2023. Synthetic drug production in the previous three years was primarily for domestic consumption, while in 2023, synthetic drugs were produced with the intention of supplying Central Asian countries.

Two types of synthetic drugs - Alpha-PVP and mephedrone – are manufactured domestically in Kazakhstan. The inputs for Alpha-PVP may include sulfuric acid (reagent), pyrrolidine (reagent), and hydrochloric acid (reagent). The inputs for mephedrone may include potassium permanganate (reagent), sulfuric acid (reagent), and hydrochloric acid (reagent).

To combat domestic production of synthetic drugs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs drafted legislation that would increase penalties for illicit trafficking and diversion of chemicals within the country and regulate the use of drugs containing narcotic components. The legislative proposal is awaiting approval in the Parliament. In the first nine months of 2023, law enforcement seized multiple tons of precursors. The newly adopted 2023-2025 Comprehensive Strategy to Combat Drug Trafficking and Drug Addiction calls for a tightening of controls on precursors at border and customs checkpoints. Lack of equipment such as gas detectors, which could help detect hidden chemicals, and the fact that the precursors were diverted in the country after crossing the border, led to a reduced detection rate at the border.

In 2019, Kazakhstan enacted policies granting the government the authority to add new psychoactive substances into the List of Controlled Substances, which considerably sped up the approval process for adding new substances to the controlled substance lists. On March 20, the government added an additional 27 narcotics, psychotropic substances, and precursors to the List of Controlled Substances, bringing the total number to 145.

The Kazakhstan government's policy objective is to decrease the importation of psychoactive substances, as well as the domestic production of synthetic drugs, in order to

significantly reduce the number of drug users. Kazakhstan attaches a great deal of importance to regional and international cooperation and is an active participant in initiatives launched to combat new psychoactive substances.

Kazakhstan is a member of the U.S.-led Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats.

Kyrgyz Republic

The Drug Enforcement Service under the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic is the main body for countering synthetic drug production and trafficking. The market for synthetic drugs in the Kyrgyz Republic has changed from a single substance, Spice/K2, a synthetic form of cannabis, with a relatively small number of structurally similar substances, to a huge and ever-increasing range consisting of hundreds of substances, diverse in their structure.

The problem of selling drugs, psychotropic substances, and NPS on the Internet and the global network significantly complicates the fight against this crime and as a result, in all Central Asian countries, there is an increase in the spread of synthetics drugs that are displacing traditional types of drugs on the black market.

In the first eight months of 2023 CNS liquidated three synthetic drug production laboratories and 13 internet marketplaces. The service seized 44.5 kg of psychotropic substances from illegal drug trafficking, most of which was mephedrone, along with trace amounts of MDMA.

The Kyrgyz Republic is a member of the U.S.-led Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats.

Laos

Specific data regarding the scale of licit production of opiates and other synthetic drugs in Laos' small pharmaceutical industry are not known, but no evidence has surfaced to suggest that legitimate pharmaceutical supplies are being diverted to illicit supply chains. Neither law enforcement nor prosecutors reported illicit drug production in Laos in 2023. However, in 2022, drug manufacturing equipment was identified during a major

methamphetamine seizure, implying the existence of illicit manufacturing in the country. In 2021, a clandestine laboratory in Oudomxay Province was discovered and shut down.

The Ministry of Health, in cooperation with the Ministries of Industry and Commerce and Public Security, formulate the import/export regime and regulatory framework for the movement of precursor chemicals. A limited number of significant seizures in 2022 and 2023 demonstrated a growing awareness of the importance of interdicting precursor chemicals, but gaps in governing regulations and an imperfect understanding of controls for dual use chemicals persist. Relevant Lao officials are aware of the need to schedule NPS and have taken initial steps in that direction.

Mexico

Mexico has a significant pharmaceutical industry driven in part by its proximity to the United States as an export market. Approximately 400 manufacturers produce pharmaceuticals as part of the country's licit industry, including approximately three-fourths of the world's 25 largest drug companies. Many labs feature U.S. Food and Drug Administration or European Medicine Agency approval, strengthening Mexico as a pharmaceutical producer and exporter.

Most precursor chemicals used to produce synthetic drugs in Mexico come from producers in the PRC and India – including for licit and illicit manufacture. Though the Mexican government does not publicly, consistently recognize illicit fentanyl production in Mexico, transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) source precursor chemicals, including those used to synthesize fentanyl, through legal purchase from foreign companies as well as illicit diversion. Mexico maintains a registry of controlled chemicals known to be used in the illicit manufacture of synthetic drugs, but authorities do not consistently inspect, target, or investigate importers.

There are no reliable or official estimates of illicit synthetic drug production in Mexico. Mexican authorities reportedly seized nearly 150 metric tons (MT) of methamphetamine, 1.7 MT of fentanyl, and 658 clandestine labs in the first seven months of 2023. The vast majority of clandestine lab seizures have taken place in the Pacific coast state of Sinaloa; however, an outsourcing production model and fragmented supply chains for illicit production minimize the impact of individual seizures.

The Federal Commission for the Protection Against Sanitary Risk, responsible for regulating many chemicals required for illicit drug production, collaborates with the National Guard, Customs Agency, and Attorney General's Office on enforcement. Mexico controls all but four chemicals listed in the 1988 UN Drug Convention. Mexico has regulatory frameworks on identifying NPS including the General Law of Health and the Watch List of Non-Regulated Chemical Substances that can be used to manufacture synthetic drugs. Mexico also has a national-level early warning system to promote collaboration and purports to share information with other regional or international systems through the INCB Precursors Incident Communication System platform.

Mexico is a member of the U.S.-led Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats.

Netherlands

The Kingdom of the Netherlands is a major transit hub for illicit synthetic drug substances, particularly methamphetamine from Mexico, and is a large producer and trader of synthetic drugs, most notably MDMA and amphetamine.

Illegal domestic production is very advanced. The total number of clandestine labs has been estimated by Dutch authorities to range between 150 and 400. Labs are typically joint ventures between criminal groups with compartmentalized manufacturing and limited lifespans. Primary drugs synthesized include amphetamine variants (methamphetamine, MDMA, captagon) and cocaine conversion with smaller batches of niche drugs. Most of the drugs manufactured domestically are exported to Europe and the Middle East. The Netherlands is also a source of synthetic drugs (particularly MDMA and LSD) to the United States, primarily via postal and express consignment parcels.

A new law entered into force in January 2022, giving the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and the Ministry of Justice and Security the ability to schedule chemicals that can be used to manufacture illicit drugs that have no known legal use. This policy is maintained current by a Panel of Experts who updates the scheduling as new substances occur.

Fentanyl is a List I substance under the Netherlands Opium Act. Analogues are not fully regulated as the prohibition of substances lies with those that are specifically listed on the Opium Act. The Netherlands introduced a bill in 2019 on NPS requiring the regulation of

analogues, but it has not yet come into force. It will likely be passed in 2024, but as such, there is little data on the impact of articulated policies on scheduling NPS.

The Netherlands is a member of the U.S.-led Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats.

Nigeria

Fentanyl is increasingly finding its way into Nigeria's illicit drug market. Small quantities of synthetic drugs are exported to the United States through international packages services like DHL and through courier to Europe and the Middle East, specifically Oman, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Qatar. Drugs are also trafficked out of Nigeria through land borders, particularly in the north, to Niger and Cameroon where they travel through the Sahel to Libya, Egypt, and Sudan. Synthetic opioids from India, Pakistan, China, and the United Kingdom are the most recent NPS found in Nigeria in the form of tablets and capsules. Tramadol, tapentadol, and fentanyl, transiting through countries with weak enforcement are the most commonly available substances. The substances are sometimes shipped directly to Nigeria or through neighboring countries, such as Ghana, Togo, and Benin.

Synthetic drug use in Nigeria is focused mostly among younger individuals and women. Synthetic drugs are more frequently being sold through e-commerce and social media platforms. In nightclubs, synthetic drugs are sold, distributed, and mixed with other substances to mask the original substance. The latest synthetic strains are commonly called "COLOS" or "COLORADO" which are synthetic cannabinoids from the United States and Canada that are combined with cannabis and other opioids. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) is working on a new legal framework to address the spread of synthetic drugs in Nigeria.

Nigeria is a member of the U.S.-led Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats.

Pakistan

In Pakistan, synthetic drug trafficking is increasing at a faster rate than the trafficking of traditional, plant-based illicit drugs. Methamphetamine, primarily from Afghanistan, is the

principal synthetic drug transiting through Pakistan. Limited data exists as Pakistan grapples with formulating an adequate response to the developing risks.

The Anti-Narcotics Force, the primary drug enforcement agency in Pakistan, reports that the flow of synthetic drugs from Afghanistan into Pakistan increased more than 60 percent from July 2022-June 2023 compared to July 2021-June 2022. Most synthetic drugs and associated precursors are destined for global markets. Many such precursors transit Pakistan from China and India to Afghanistan where groups use these inputs in synthetic drug production. Pakistan law enforcement agencies reported zero seizures of fentanyl during 2023.

According to UNODC reports, the prevalence of NPS use remains relatively low in the general population while there is a notable increase in the use of certain categories of NPS among high-risk drug users and marginalized groups. These high-risk groups include those who inject drugs, the homeless, and prison populations. Specifically, the consumption of stimulants, synthetic cannabinoid receptor agonists, synthetic opioids, and sedatives/hypnotics (primarily benzodiazepine-type NPS) is more common within these populations. The emergence of highly potent substances within these categories has raised concerns regarding elevated health risks, potentially leading to unintentional overdose events and death. One of the key challenges associated with NPS is the limited knowledge regarding the purity and composition of products containing these substances. This lack of information places users at significant risk.

Pakistan is a member of the U.S.-led Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats.

Philippines

Since 2022, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) has had no reports of the presence of clandestine laboratories in the Philippines. However, there are laboratories that manufacture methamphetamine hydrochloride using precursors such as ephedrine/pseudoephedrine and phenyl-2-propanone (P2P). Some samples revealed use of the Nagai method or the reduction of ephedrine/pseudoephedrine as the method of synthesis. The Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 serves as the country's primary policy for combating dangerous drugs, including the prohibition of importation of any dangerous drug, controlled precursors, and essential chemicals.

In 2022, the policy-making agency on drug matters, the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB), issued a regulation for the inclusion of Isotonitazene, Diphenidine, Clonazepam, and Flubromazepam on the list of dangerous drugs. Drug interdiction remains a challenging and demanding task for individual agencies. The government promotes and implements collaboration among law enforcement and prosecution as well as interagency programs to provide a public health perspective in educating and disseminating an evidence-based drug prevention education and effective drug rehabilitation programs.

The DDB, together with its member agencies, developed and issued a regulation specifically converting the Committee on Reclassification, Addition, or Removal of Any Drugs/Substances from the List of Dangerous Drugs/Controlled Precursors to a Technical Working Group (TWG). This TWG is made up of the DDB, PDEA, Philippine National Police, DOH, Food and Drug Administration, University of the Philippines National Poison Management and Control Center, and National Bureau of Investigation. The TWG is tasked with gathering and organizing all data relative to drugs and chemicals under review/consideration; it then submits its findings and recommendations to the DDB. During the reporting period, the DDB promulgated Guidelines for Drug Profiling, which are intended to identify the specific links between drug samples and possible methods used for clandestine drug manufacture. The DDB organized a workshop for the development of guidelines for an early warning system for NPS. The workshop aims to consult and discuss with diverse agencies (law enforcement, public health, academe, policy making) on the requirements for the establishment of the early warning system. The same group will reconvene in early 2024 to finalize the draft guidelines.

The Philippine Department of Justice (DOJ) is the prosecution arm of the government responsible for investigating crimes and prosecuting offenders. The Philippine DOJ issued a policy that mandates all prosecutors of the National Prosecution Service take proactive involvement in the investigation of crimes including the violations of the Dangerous Drugs Act.

The Philippines is a member of the U.S.-led Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats.

Poland

Data on the scale of legal domestic production of synthetic drugs is not available, but

Polish law enforcement partners have observed an increase in illicit synthetic drug production, trafficking, and use, noting an upward trend in the manufacturing of synthetic drugs such as cathinones (e.g., clephedrone and ephedrine) and stimulants (e.g., amphetamine, MDMA) in clandestine laboratories. In the period January - November 2023, the Polish Police Central Bureau of Investigation seized 953 kg of amphetamine, exceeding the amount seized over the entirety of 2022 (750 kg). Over the same eleven-month period, Polish authorities also seized 33 kg of MDMA (8.98 kg in 2022), 156,375 MDMA pills (25,478 in 2022), 225 kg of mephedrone (129 kg in 2022), 7.4 metric tons (MT) of Clephedrone (4.6 MT in 2022), and 24 kg of methamphetamine (31 kg in 2022).

Additionally, over the first eleven months of 2023, Polish authorities dismantled 54 synthetic drug laboratories, compared to 42 in 2022. Poland has also reported an increase in recent years in the consumption and smuggling of various opiate derivatives.

Methamphetamine is produced from ephedrine or pseudoephedrine precursors while amphetamines are produced from the precursors phenyl-2-nitropropene (P2NP) or benzyl methyl ketone (BMK). Of the synthetic cathinones, mephedrone (4 -MMC) is produced from the precursors 2-Bromo-4-methylpropiofenone and 4-methylpropiofenone; clephedrone (4-CMC) is produced from precursors 2-Bromo-4-chloropropiofenone and 4-chloropropiofenone; clophedrone (3-CMC) is produced from precursors 2-Bromo-3-chloropropiofenone and 3-chloropropiofenone; and metaphedrone (3-MMC) is produced from precursors 2-bromo-3-methylpropiofenone and 3-methylpropiofenone.

Poland has enacted legislation to combat drug trafficking and prosecute offenders, including those involved in the synthetic drug trade. The current laws provide law enforcement agencies with powers to seize illicit drugs and arrest individuals involved in their production, distribution, or trafficking. However, the effectiveness of these frameworks varies, and Polish authorities continue efforts to enhance legal measures, adapt to emerging challenges, and ensure successful prosecutions of synthetic drug traffickers, according to contacts. Polish law enforcement agencies have reported that they have developed testing capabilities to detect and identify synthetic drugs, relying on laboratory analysis techniques to determine the composition and potency of seized substances. In recent years, Polish

authorities responding to the global increase in fentanyl-related incidents have also improved their capacity to test for fentanyl and its analogues, given the significant health risks associated with these potent opioids.

Generic law on new psychoactive substances was introduced into Polish legislation in 2018.

Such a generic solution means the legislation establishes a precise definition of families of substances, i.e., providing for control not only of a specific substance and its salts, esters, or isomers, but of a wider group of substances. This group of substances includes structural compounds similar to the controlled substances in which the components of the chemical compounds have been replaced. The generic law has, in a sense, equated NPS with drugs because the production, processing, import, export and transport of new psychoactive substances are subject to criminal liability.

The introduction of generic law makes it possible to control NPS based on regulations issued by the Minister of Health, which significantly accelerates the control of subsequent NPS. That is, in accordance with Polish law, NPS are subject to assessment by a designated task force of the Minister of Health for assessing the risk of threats to human health or life related to the use of NPS. That team recommends to the Minister to include them in the list of NPS. The list of NPS includes not only the substances themselves, but also defines their groups. The time necessary to generate a regulation is shorter than in the case of changing statutory regulations, thus enabling more effective and faster protection of society against dangerous substances.

In short, the generic approach to NPS essentially places NPS under similar regulatory and legal scrutiny as traditional drugs. Activities such as the production, processing, import, export, and transport of NPS are subject to criminal liability, aligning their legal treatment with that of controlled narcotics and substances. However, there is no data readily available on the impacts of these policies or any specific outcomes or effectiveness of this approach. Typically, the effectiveness of such policies would be evaluated through metrics such as changes in the availability and use of NPS, law enforcement and customs activities, health-related incidents, and judicial proceedings related to NPS offenses, but these are not available.

Poland is a member of the U.S.-led Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats.

South Africa

Synthetic drugs and NPS represent a very small percentage of the illicit drug market in South Africa, according to the South African Police Service (SAPS) Chemical Monitoring Program (CMP). These drugs would normally fall within the schedule of listed substances in the Drug Trafficking Act 140 of 1992, or Medicine Control Act 101 of 1965, which have been updated on numerous occasions. South Africa does not have a specific policy pertaining to NPS.

The most frequently reported semi-synthetic drug in Southern Africa is nyaope – a cocktail of heroin, cannabis, and antiretroviral drugs. Nyaope was classified as an illegal substance with the amendment of the Drugs and Trafficking Act of 2014. While some manufacturing of methamphetamine exists in South Africa, ephedrine and pseudoephedrine used to synthesize the drug largely originate in Nigeria and India. Recent South African police seizures point to an influx of methamphetamine from Afghanistan.

The U.S. DEA is working closely with SAPS CMP to develop and strengthen South Africa's standard operating procedures on chemical monitoring to include onsite inspections, records review, and precursor chemical diversion investigations.

South Africa is a member of the U.S.-led *Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats* and has expressed strong interest in working with the United States and international community to combat this growing problem.

Slovakia

Slovakia is not a key producer of synthetic drugs but functions primarily as a transit country for foreign drug trafficking organizations. Although Slovak citizens have participated in these illicit activities, their roles have mainly been supportive.

The National Anti-Drug Headquarters, part of the National Crime Agency (NAKA) under the Ministry of Interior, is responsible for the investigation of drug-related crimes. The Ministry of Health coordinates the government's drug policy, in cooperation with other government agencies. NAKA collects, processes, and analyzes data pertaining to drug-related crimes. NAKA also tracks and monitors individuals involved in these offenses, confiscated controlled substances (both narcotics and psychotropics), NPS, and chemical precursors.

According to NAKA, most synthetic drugs transiting through Slovakia originate from Hungary, the Czech Republic, Türkiye, Austria, Bulgaria, and the United Kingdom. The movement of synthetic drugs is often coordinated by interconnected family networks operating in the Trnava region of Slovakia, an area near Bratislava that shares a border with Hungary.

NAKA has identified methamphetamine, synthetic cannabinoids, and synthetic opioids as among the types of synthetic drugs produced in and transited through Slovakia and the wider region and has reported that a notable methamphetamine market exists in Slovakia. NAKA noted an increase in imports of large volumes of narcotic and psychotropic substances. NAKA also identified the participation of criminal groups from the Balkan Peninsula in the illicit trafficking of drugs within and through Slovakia.

In its efforts to counter the illicit movement of these drugs, NAKA, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, proposed to include 15 new psychoactive substances on the “List of Prohibited Substances,” an annex to Act No. 139/1998 Coll. on narcotic substances, psychotropic substances and preparations. The government adopted this amendment in 2022. In cooperation with counterparts in neighboring countries, NAKA also has focused on identifying criminal organizations involved in the production of methamphetamine and the smuggling of narcotic and psychotropic substances and their precursors in continental Europe.

Additionally, in 2021, the government approved the National Anti-Drug Strategy 2021-2025, with a horizon extending to 2030. The strategy addresses the evolving challenges in the realm of drug control in Slovakia and recognizes the changing landscape of drug use, including synthetic drugs, shifts in perceptions of substances like marijuana, and the growing prevalence of the online drug trade. The strategy aligns with the EU’s comprehensive approach to tackling drug-related issues while prioritizing the well-being of individuals and society.

Slovak authorities face major challenges in combatting new psychoactive substances, including the inflexibility and lengthy process of classifying these drugs as prohibited substances. At present, the legislative process typically spans one year or longer, from the initial proposal for inclusion of a substance to the implementation of the legal regulation.

There is a pressing need to update the legislation and underscore the need to adopt a generic classification system for new psychoactive substances.

In 2022, the most recent period for which data is available, there was no noticeable surge in cases involving synthetic drug use.

Synthetic drug importation and distribution in Slovakia typically involve seemingly legitimate businesses that are commonly run by a nominal manager known as the "white horse." These entities employ methods such as "dead drops" and automated collection points for drug distribution via postal and courier services. To manage transactions, they utilize multiple accounts both domestically and internationally, as well as cryptocurrency transactions.

International cooperation on countering synthetic drug trafficking also took place at the bilateral level between the Slovak Republic and counterparts in the Czech Republic, Austria, Germany, and other countries.

NAKA is also active in two EUROPOL projects under the EMPACT (European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats) framework, one of which is focused on cocaine, heroin, and marijuana and the other on synthetic drugs and NPS. Through these projects, NAKA is involved in operational activities related to the production of synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances, smuggling of cocaine, heroin, and marijuana, cultivation of marijuana, detection of organized groups in West Africa and the Balkans, liquidation of drug laboratories, sale of narcotics and psychotropic substances on the Internet, and other related activities.

Slovakia is a member of the U.S.-led Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats.

Syria

According to Syrian state-run media, around 70 licensed pharmaceutical factories and 96 laboratories operate in Syria, with 20 factories under construction as of 2021. Although Syrian officials have claimed that the country's pharmaceutical industry provides more than 90 percent of domestic needs, other media reporting indicates that Syria remains reliant on imports, with Iran providing up to 35 percent of domestic needs. As of November 2020, five

Syrian companies operated as key distribution agents for global pharmaceutical brands, according to media reporting.

Illicit production spans government-controlled areas of Syria, including ports and populated areas in Damascus, Dara'a, Latakia, and Homs governorates, according to media reporting. In 2023, the Syrian government announced arrests of several drug traffickers in government-held areas in Qamishli, northeast Syria, including the seizure of “hundreds of kilograms of captagon tablets that were hidden in a fuel tank.” However, these arrests did not include any reported lab seizures.

Captagon is a brand name for fenethylline, an amphetamine-type stimulant, which is a controlled substance and no longer legally produced. Most tablets pressed with the captagon logo contain up to 25 percent amphetamine sulfate as the stimulant drug substance, produced through a process known as the Leuckart method. These tablets also usually contain up to 20 percent caffeine or theophylline as first tier cutting materials.

The Syrian Ministry of Health is responsible for registering foreign pharmaceutical companies and products, as well as setting prices for types of medicines in coordination with the Ministry of Economy. The General Foreign Trade Organization regulates distribution agreements between foreign firms and local distribution agents. Syrian law criminalizes the production, trafficking, and distribution of illicit drugs. However, local tribes, government-backed militias, and elements of the security services, including the Syrian Army's Fourth Armored Division, are widely reported to be involved in the production or smuggling of illicit drugs from government-held areas to neighboring countries.

Following Syria's readmission to the Arab League in May 2023, the Government of Syria committed to form technical committees with Jordan and Iraq to address drug trafficking. The Syrian government has also sought to participate in initiatives led by international bodies such as INTERPOL to address drug trafficking. However, these efforts have not led to significant action against drug trafficking in government-held areas.

Tajikistan

Tajikistan does not have a legal domestic industry for the production of synthetic drugs. The country imports pharmaceutical drugs from India, the Russian Federation, Türkiye, and other countries.

No clandestine laboratories or methods of synthesis of illicit synthetic drugs were identified in Tajikistan during the first nine months of 2023. According to the Drug Control Agency report for the first six months of 2023, Tajik law enforcement agencies seized 2,955 tablets of synthetic psychotropic substances (605 MDMA, 176 phenobarbital, 2,174 pregabalin).

To ensure compliance with the rules for legal circulation of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, and their precursors, DCA conducted 33 inspections in medical institutions, pharmacies, and industrial enterprises of the country. The licensing commission held three meetings in 2023 to consider 11 applications. Eight licenses and two certificates for the import of precursors were issued, and one license was canceled.

Tropicamide eyedrops and some anti-seizure medications were initially uncontrolled substances in Tajikistan. A Tajik anti-drug non-governmental organization successfully lobbied to have these scheduled, as the combination of those two drugs was identified as one of the most common forms of prescription drug use among youth.

Tajikistan is a member of the U.S.-led Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats.

Thailand

Thailand faces significant challenges in fighting the trafficking of synthetic drugs and NPS. The Royal Thai Government has implemented initial steps to address these challenges, and the newly formed government has vowed publicly that narcotics law enforcement and demand reduction are priorities. Law enforcement has begun to target the trafficking of precursor chemicals transiting Thailand to curb production in neighboring Burma and Laos.

Thailand is a major transit hub for synthetic drugs and psychoactive substances in Southeast Asia. Methamphetamine is the most widely trafficked synthetic drug in the region. Thailand has historically been a producer of methamphetamine, but due to political instability in neighboring countries and efforts by Thai law enforcement, the bulk of synthetic drug production has moved to Burma and production in Thailand has steadily declined.

Despite this decline in production, the demand for these substances is at an all-time high. In the first nine months of 2023, Thai authorities seized over 38 million methamphetamine tablets and over 22 metric tons of crystal methamphetamine. The majority of this methamphetamine was produced in Burma and Laos.

Thailand faces several challenges that contribute to the increase in demand and trafficking of synthetic drugs and psychoactive substances, including a lack of public awareness, porous borders, and well-developed and established transportation networks. Many people in Thailand are not aware of the dangers of synthetic drugs and psychoactive substances, and this lack of awareness creates a highly vulnerable population. Thailand's long and unsecured borders with Burma and Laos create opportunities for drug traffickers to operate with relative ease.

The Royal Thai Government has taken some steps to address this growing problem. The newly formed government has publicized an ambitious anti-drug posture and advocated for the reversal in recent cannabis decriminalization, targeting in part the recent influx of dispensary businesses that have overrun many metropolitan areas. Additionally, the Royal Thai Police and the Office of Narcotics Control Board (ONCB) have increased resources and staffing to focus on the drug threat. ONCB has begun efforts to raise awareness of drugs in general and has formed new task forces in the Isan Region to focus on the trafficking of controlled substances, primarily synthetic drugs originating in Laos.

Thailand is a member of the U.S.-led Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats.

Türkiye

The Turkish government's 2023 National Drug Report described a continuation of a sharply increasing trend of methamphetamine seizures in Türkiye; the report assessed that due to the increase in seizures it was clear Türkiye was a target for methamphetamine trafficking. In August 2023, Istanbul police seized 124 kg of methamphetamine and detained two suspects. Istanbul police in September 2023 seized 738 kg of methamphetamine and detained three Iranian-national suspects. In a joint operation with the Turkish National Police, customs enforcement teams in August 2023 seized 245 kg of methamphetamine during a detailed search inside a vehicle arriving at Habur Customs Gate on the Türkiye-Iraq border.

According to the Turkish government, in 2022 the Turkish government seized the largest amount of methamphetamine in the country's history. A 2023 Turkish government report indicated that in 2022, 101,193 suspects were detained in methamphetamine incidents and 16.2 metric tons of methamphetamine were seized. Government reporting also noted

significant amounts of liquid methamphetamine, including facilities to convert liquid to crystal methamphetamines, were seized and discovered in Türkiye and were often associated with suspects of Iranian nationality or near the Türkiye-Iran border. The Turkish government reported several large seizures of methamphetamine or amphetamine precursor chemicals being transshipped from Mexico to China via Türkiye.

A 2023 Report noted a 73 percent increase in the number of captagon tablets seized in 2022 from 2021, and a 33.7 percent increase in captagon incidents over the same period. Customs enforcement teams in Istanbul in August 2023 seized 2,400,000 captagon tablets at Ambarli Port worth approximately \$6.5 million.

According to the 2023 National Drug Report, NPS, both plant-based and synthetic, are frequently encountered on the drug market in Türkiye. Türkiye combats NPS via its Early Warning System working group, which meets twice annually and provides a mechanism to report and assess NPS encountered in Türkiye for potential listing in Türkiye's Law on the Control of Narcotic Substances.

Türkiye is a member of the U.S.-led Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats.

Uzbekistan

The government of Uzbekistan is increasingly concerned about the growing transit of synthetic drugs and chemical precursors through the country. Besides traditional drug smuggling channels along its borders with Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and the Kyrgyz Republic, criminals also transport synthetic drugs and controlled medicines to Uzbekistan from Kazakhstan and Russia. In July 2023, Uzbek law enforcement reported dismantling a small clandestine laboratory illicitly producing mephedrone.

Uzbekistan does not produce a significant quantity of synthetic drugs. Uzbekistan's legal pharmaceutical market consists of 152 domestic companies who collectively produce over 2,300 types of medicines. Over 15,000 pharmacies are engaged in wholesale and retail trade of medicines. Uzbekistan imports over 5,700 types of medicine from 70 countries. The country exports 231 types of medicines to 23 countries.

The government has demonstrated a commitment to developing the pharmaceutical industry by providing customs duty exemptions for pharmaceutical equipment, eliminating

bureaucratic barriers, introducing quality control standards, and attracting investment into the sector. The country's pharmaceutical industry received \$128 million in investment in 2023. The government aims to triple pharmaceutical production and provide 80 percent of the internal market with domestic medicines by 2026.

Uzbekistan is a member of the U.S.-led Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats.

Country Reports

U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

Afghanistan

A. Introduction

Historically Afghanistan has been the world's largest supplier of opiates, but information reported by international organizations and other sources confirms a significant decrease in poppy cultivation. Since the Taliban takeover in August 2021, the United States has supported limited counternarcotics efforts through the United Nations (UN), the United States Agency for Global Media (USAGM), and other international organizations. The absence of U.S. personnel means that independent verification of Taliban claims on seizures and enforcement activities – and the current scope of the opiate supply moving out of the country - is difficult to obtain. Much of the information reported below comes from our partners, including the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and publicly available reporting from UK-funded geospatial imagery analysis firm Alcis.

Primary trafficking routes for narcotics out of Afghanistan include the Balkan route (Iran to Turkey and the Caucasus, to Eastern and Western Europe); the southern route (Pakistan to Europe, Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and onward to Europe and Canada); and the northern route (Central Asia to the Russian Federation and Europe). While the Taliban's April 2022 ban on narcotics has decreased poppy cultivation, the narcotics trade continued after the Taliban publicized a one-year grace period for the sale of opium at the onset of the ban. Alcis and UNODC reported an 85 to 95 percent reduction in country-wide poppy cultivation in 2023, as compared to 2022. Alcis' pricing data and interviews with traffickers point to the likely presence of opium stockpiles as traffickers navigate the initial years of the ban, signaling more time is needed to assess the ban's impact on cross-border trafficking and the presence of Afghanistan-origin opiates in the region and beyond.

Afghanistan also has one of the world's largest per capita populations suffering from substance use disorders, and anecdotal reporting describes increased instances of female substance abuse in response to the Taliban's restrictions on the rights of women and girls.

Afghanistan remains a major drug transit and producing country, but was removed from the list of countries determined to have “failed demonstrably” to adhere to obligations under international drug control agreements and the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act due to its substantial reduction in poppy cultivation over the previous 12 months.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

The Ministry of Interior has responsibility for drug control efforts in Afghanistan. While it is not possible to directly verify the Taliban’s claims on its eradication efforts, seizure data, interdiction efforts, and criminal arrests related to counternarcotics, several ministries are reportedly involved in the coordination and implementation of the narcotics ban. Eradication efforts nationwide are coordinated through the Ministry of Interior’s Office of Counternarcotics, while drug demand reduction efforts, public information, and substance use treatment centers are coordinated with the Ministry of Information and Culture, Ministry of Public Health, and the Ministry of Haj and Religious Affairs. Additionally, the Taliban reported in November that they have distributed wheat seeds to former poppy farmers through the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, and some job placement and training through the Ministry of Education for substance users.

Since August 2021, the United States has continued counternarcotics assistance through the United Nations, Colombo Plan, and other international organizations. None of this limited assistance flows to or through any Taliban entities or individuals, nor is it coordinated with any Taliban entities or individuals. This funding focuses on alternative livelihoods, drug demand reduction and treatment, and anti-narcotics public information programs. U.S. support for alternative livelihoods includes the development of licit, high-value crop production as an economically viable alternative to poppy cultivation and includes vital efforts to connect farmers and agribusinesses with domestic and international markets for sustainable food crops such as orchard fruits, nuts, and spices. In the first nine months of 2023, the program supported farmers and agribusinesses to secure direct sales valued at over \$23.3 million for 4,498 metric tons (MT) of high-value agricultural products to domestic and international markets. The program continues to secure valuable contracts for

farmers and agribusinesses, including female farmers and female-owned businesses, to sell their agricultural products at domestic and international agricultural trade fairs.

2. Supply Reduction

The United States and its partners are closely monitoring the reported reduction in poppy cultivation following the ban announced in 2022. Although the Taliban have not released official figures, according to the 2023 UNODC report on opium poppy in Afghanistan, there was a 95 percent decrease in cultivation with 10,800 hectares (ha) cultivated in the first 10 months of 2023, with the potential to produce 333 metric tons (MT) of opium, compared to UNODC's 2022 cultivation estimate of 233,000 ha, with the potential to produce 6,200 MT of opium. UNODC reported 99 percent reduction in poppy cultivation in Helmand alone. UNODC reports relatively low levels of poppy cultivation in Badakhshan, Badghis, Balkh, Farah, Faryab, Ghor, Helmand, Kandahar, Kunar, Nangarhar, Nimroz, Laghman, Sar-i-Pul, Uruzgan, and Zabul.

While reports confirm farmers cultivated substantially less poppy in 2023, seizure data from Afghanistan's neighbors suggests the Taliban were less successful in restricting the production and trade of intoxicants. The UNODC Drugs Monitoring Platform, which tracks seizures of opioids, cannabis, amphetamines, sedatives, tranquilizers, and cocaine, noted a total of 13,115 kg of narcotics interdicted in Iran and 5,6998.9 kg of narcotics interdicted in Pakistan.

The naturally occurring ephedra plant, which can be used to make ephedrine (a necessary precursor for methamphetamine production) continues to be harvested in the central highlands of Afghanistan. Since 2022, the Taliban have reported the destruction of several ephedrine labs and closed bazaars storing and selling ephedra and ephedrine. As a result, production of methamphetamine has shifted to more remote areas and clandestine labs, and it is produced and trafficked in smaller quantities. Demand has increased (and thus prices) for ephedra, ephedrine, and methamphetamine.

Between 2017 and 2021, Afghanistan-origin methamphetamine seizures from neighboring countries increased nearly twelvefold from 2.5 MT in 2017 to 29.7 MT in 2021, according to a report published by UNODC in September 2023.

Afghan opium is typically refined into heroin or morphine in Afghanistan or neighboring countries. According to U.S. sampling data, Afghanistan is not a major supplier of opiates to the United States; the United States estimates heroin from South Asia represents less than one percent by weight of heroin samples tested in the United States.

After the Taliban takeover in 2021, the United States stopped supporting Afghanistan's Sensitive Investigative Unit (SIU) and National Interdiction Unit (NIU), which the United States formerly mentored. Therefore, the continued existence and work of these units cannot be evaluated at this time.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

Afghanistan has one of the highest substance use rates in the world. To stem the effects of this public health crisis, the United States continues to fund projects implemented by UNODC and the Colombo Plan to increase access to treatment for drug use in rural areas, support treatment centers for women, children, and adolescents, as well as a small number of centers for men, and support online continuing education and training for treatment service providers.

Anecdotal evidence from international organizations describes an uptick in female substance users in the country and methamphetamine usage among the population that have returned to Afghanistan from neighboring Iran. Typically, opiate use leads to the usage of stimulant narcotics. According to anecdotal reports, un-housed individuals are often targeted to forcibly participate in the Taliban's substance use treatment facilities.

Counternarcotics public information programs produced by the United States Agency for Global Media (USAGM), including Voice of America and Radio Free Europe, continue in Afghanistan, reaching nearly 20 million Afghans weekly via radio and social media.

4. Corruption

As a matter of stated policy, the Taliban do not encourage or facilitate activity associated with drug trafficking; however, the Taliban's history of profiting from the drug trade casts doubt on the extent to which Taliban officials will adhere to the policy. Reporting suggests the Taliban have achieved some success toward their stated goal of eliminating corruption, although the United States has limited ability to quantify the impact. The international community continues to monitor if the Taliban engage in corrupt practices related to the illicit drug trade since the ban. Contacts reported that the cost of exporting licit crops across land borders dropped significantly after the Taliban takeover, as bribes were no longer demanded of traders.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

Since the end of August 2021, the United States has not maintained an official presence in Afghanistan. The United States Mission to Afghanistan, also known as the Afghanistan Affairs Unit (AAU), was established in Doha, Qatar, following the U.S. Embassy Kabul's suspension of operations. As described above, modest U.S.-funded counternarcotics programs continue through international organizations, the USAGM, and non-governmental organizations, including alternative development, drug demand reduction, and anti-narcotics public information programs. The AAU has weekly engagements with the Taliban Political Commission (TPC) in Doha and continues to solicit more detailed information and data related to the Taliban's counternarcotics efforts.

D. Conclusion

Afghanistan's role in the international drug trade poses major challenges. Trafficking of Afghanistan-origin narcotics is a serious threat to countries and communities along key international trafficking routes. The United States continues to monitor the impact of the Taliban's ban on poppy cultivation, illicit narcotics, and related activity, including Afghanistan's attempts to disrupt methamphetamine production and trafficking. Afghanistan's weak economy, institutions, and ongoing humanitarian crisis raise concerns that despite the apparent initial impact of the Taliban's narcotics ban, farmers

will likely again turn to poppy cultivation unless there is a plan to address the potential loss of over 400,000 livelihoods linked to opium cultivation.

Albania

Albanian-led organized crime groups wield significant influence on the international cannabis, cocaine, and heroin markets, according to Albanian law enforcement authorities. These Albanian-led organized crime groups exhibit increasingly sophisticated crimes, communications, and money laundering. They operate across the Balkans as well as in the European Union (EU), United States, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, and Turkey. They have gained direct access to cocaine production in South America. They use the Albanian economy, particularly the construction sector, to launder proceeds and contribute to corruption in the country. Violent crime in Albania, including assassinations, is often associated with organized crime, and judges, prosecutors, police, and journalists have been subjected to intimidation. Officials have not reported finding synthetic drugs, including fentanyl, in significant amounts.

Albanian law enforcement agencies participated in several multi-state operations. These and other operations, often supported by U.S. advisors assisting with investigations, led to the dismantling of international drug trafficking organizations. Since January, Albania's Special Prosecution Structure Against Corruption and Organized Crime (SPAK) sequestered and seized assets including real estate, vehicles, businesses, and cash. Albania's High Court rejected attempts to stop the seizure of assets worth \$77 million from an individual who was investigated and tried for past involvement in drug trafficking.

Albanian State Police and SPAK continued to investigate domestic cannabis cultivation and international trafficking. Joint operations with EU countries, Eurojust, and Europol led to over 200 arrest warrants in 2023 for police, local officials, and prosecutors for trafficking from South America and the Middle East, and through Durres port, to Western Europe. One seizure included over 8 metric tons of cannabis, heroin, and cocaine and \$10.5 million in assets. In an investigation conducted with U.S. agencies' cooperation, investigators interdicted an exchange of cocaine and cannabis at sea; though the suspects set the vessel on fire, investigators seized 23 kilograms of cannabis, as well as firearms, ammunition, phones, and cash.

Corruption, weak rule of law, and unemployment are drivers of Albania's drug control problem. Albania should continue justice reform efforts, tighten anti-money laundering regulations and oversight, and counter organized crime groups' influence throughout

government and society. U.S. law enforcement and judicial sector assistance includes advising SPAK-led cases on narcotics and organized crime, improved interagency cooperation on investigations, corrections reforms to curtail the operations of transnational organized crime behind bars, and specialized equipment to enhance Albanian law enforcement capabilities. As part of ongoing U.S. and EU-supported justice reforms, for the 12 months before October 2023, an Albanian independent commission dismissed 68 judges and prosecutors for unexplained assets. Albanian law enforcement should take a more proactive approach against Albanian nationals' role in transnational organized crime.

The Bahamas

A. Introduction

The Bahamas' archipelago of 700 islands provides ideal geography to criminal organizations seeking to smuggle illicit drugs from South America through the Caribbean to the United States. Traffickers increasingly send cocaine loads directly from South America to the southern Bahamas via small airplanes. Traffickers also send large loads of cocaine by boat to Haiti and the Dominican Republic before dividing them into smaller parcels and sending them through The Bahamas to the United States on smaller aircraft. Marijuana is illegally grown in The Bahamas on a small scale, but most of it originates in Jamaica and transits The Bahamas as it is moved to the United States. Mexican cartels increased their activities in The Bahamas in 2023 in search of new transit routes, likely to evade heightened scrutiny and joint operations along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Transnational criminal organizations employ Bahamian gangs in the drug trade, but local officials struggle to identify and arrest key figures. The Bahamas reported an increase this year in domestic drug consumption likely fueled by payments to local traffickers in illicit product instead of currency to avoid detection. The Bahamas reported one fentanyl death in the first nine months of 2023. The Bahamas registered six deaths due to fentanyl overdoses during the last six years.

Operation Bahamas Turks and Caicos (OPBAT) is a long-standing and successful international operation between the United States, Bahamas, and Turks & Caicos, with participation from several U.S. law enforcement agencies, the Royal Bahamas Police Force (RBPF), Royal Bahamas Defense Force (RBDF), and Royal Turks & Caicos Police Force (RTCIPF). OPBAT patrols the northern Caribbean and coordinates operations to locate and apprehend traffickers. These joint operations include air, water, and drone assets.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments Policies and Trends

1. Institutional Development

Drug crimes are primarily tried in the lower Magistrates Court by police prosecutors (police officers serving as lay prosecutors). The lower court has jurisdiction over petty offenses under the Dangerous Drugs Act. These offenses are tried before a judge and do not grant defendants the right to a jury trial. More serious offenses such as possession with intent to distribute and conspiracy are tried in the upper, Supreme Court. Penalties for drug crimes range from fines to a maximum sentence of ten years.

The Bahamas forensics agency lacks adequate training, protocols, and equipment to analyze seized narcotics accurately and efficiently. This deficiency erodes the ability of prosecutors to obtain convictions. The Bahamas' laboratory sends samples to the United States for analysis, a process that is both costly and time-consuming. The United States is assisting the forensics lab to achieve international accreditation that will upgrade their operations and allow them to process evidence domestically. In August 2023, The Bahamas identified the location of a new national forensic laboratory site near the Royal Bahamas National Police headquarters. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2024.

In August 2023, the naval forces of three Caribbean countries – The Bahamas, Jamaica, and the Dominican Republic – conducted tabletop exercises aimed at improving joint interdictions at sea and enforcing maritime law. The project was paid for by the United States and implemented by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The tabletop exercises will encourage The Bahamas to sign memoranda of understanding with Jamaica and Dominican Republic in 2024 to further improve joint interdiction operations.

The Bahamas has a mutual legal assistance agreement with the United States. The Bahamas extradites its nationals to the United States under a 1990 extradition treaty.

The Bahamas signed a Comprehensive Maritime Agreement with the United States in 2004 which complements OPBAT by expanding the scope of joint law enforcement operations.

2. Supply Reduction

Authorities seized 2,093 kilograms (kg) of cocaine, 4,089 kg of marijuana, and made 33 arrests during the first nine months of 2023. Cocaine seizures represent a sixfold increase over 2022 levels, due in part to larger volumes moving through The Bahamas and greater coordination with Bahamian law enforcement.

Despite limited resources, OPBAT has maintained consistent levels of operational success covering a territory of 100,000 square miles. The RBDF launched a decentralization program aimed at shifting operations from the central island of New Providence to new bases in the north and south of the country's long archipelago. The RBDF created Northern, Central, and Southern Commands to support this effort.

In June 2023, OPBAT and Bahamian officials interdicted an illicit drug flight over the southern island of Long Island that resulted in the seizure of 509 kg of suspected cocaine and the arrest of four suspects (including a former police officer).

In July 2023 OPBAT and Bahamian counterparts interdicted an aerial target on the far-flung island of Mayaguana which resulted in the seizure of 520 kg of suspected cocaine and the aircraft. Additional intelligence led to the seizure of an additional six kg of suspected cocaine, \$80,000, fifty rounds of ammunition, and the arrest of one suspect.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

The Sandilands Rehabilitation Center in the capital city of Nassau is one of three public hospitals. It has 16 beds to support patients seeking treatment for drug and alcohol dependence. The Bahamas also hosts a small number of treatment centers operated by nonprofit organizations.

The Ministry of Education works with the Bahamian National Drug Council to support drug prevention programs and provide counseling in Bahamian schools. The 2022 Mental Health Act became effective in 2023. The Act includes provisions for the treatment of individuals diagnosed with mental illnesses from drug addiction.

4. Corruption

The Bahamas does not encourage or facilitate illicit drug production or distribution, nor is there any evidence that it is involved in laundering the proceeds of illicit drug sales. The isolation of many Bahamian islands offers advantages to drug traffickers and disadvantages to small, under-resourced police stations. Recent law enforcement operations suggest the need for more robust police presence on remote islands.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

The Bahamas is a member of the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), a security partnership created in 2010 between Caribbean countries and the United States. Through CBSI, the United States supplies the police force with essential equipment, including boats and parts, that supports interdictions and cooperation with U.S. law enforcement. The United States supported the installation of two maritime surveillance radars in Great Inagua and New Providence islands to improve Bahamian maritime domain control.

U.S. assistance to Bahamian police investigators and prosecutors aims at increasing criminal prosecutions of traffickers. Bahamian civil asset forfeiture may be another, easier option for punishing traffickers, due to lower evidentiary thresholds than criminal prosecutions. U.S. advisors assist the Financial Crimes Investigative Branch of the police force pursue the forfeiture of cash, small aircraft, and boats seized during drug operations. Despite U.S. technical assistance, the Bahamian Attorney General's office had not succeeded in forfeiting any civil assets in the first nine months of 2023.

In March 2023, high-level representatives from the United States, The Bahamas, Turks and Caicos Islands, and the United Kingdom gathered in Miami for the Northern Caribbean Security Summit (NOCSS). The two-day meeting was the first of its kind, featuring overviews of current and emerging threats, including synthetic opioids.

Delegation heads signed a statement of intent recommitting to security cooperation in the northern Caribbean and calling for joint resources to combat transnational organized crime. The Minister of National Security invited NOCSS partners to reconvene in The Bahamas in 2024. The U.S. Embassy in Nassau is preparing for both the 2024 meeting and an intercessional meeting late in 2023. To thwart the increased presence of Mexican cartels, U.S. law enforcement is working with the Bahamian police force's Drug Enforcement Unit to locate and disrupt cartel operations in The Bahamas.

D. Conclusion

The United States and The Bahamas enjoy a strong partnership that works diligently to combat drug trafficking and disrupt criminal networks. The unique challenges of securing the borders of an island nation requires sharing information quickly and managing scarce resources efficiently. Annual gatherings like the NOCSS help policymakers address emerging threats at the strategic level, while intercessional meetings help law enforcement partners improve joint operations.

To continue a positive trajectory in seizures and prosecutions, The Bahamas needs to improve evidence collection, enhance coordination between investigators and prosecutors, and make equipment maintenance routine. Continued implementation of the Defense Force's decentralization plan to expand their footprint in the northern and southern Bahamas will prevent traffickers from exploiting the country's vast maritime domain.

Belgium

Belgium's Port of Antwerp has emerged in recent years as one of the primary entry points of entry for cocaine to Europe. The port is susceptible to smuggling due to its sheer size and open geography. It is the second largest port in Europe by trade volume; has multiple, non-contiguous terminals spread over an area twice the size of Manhattan; and is a short drive from the Netherlands where many organized crime networks with ties to South American criminal organizations also import cocaine. In the first half of 2023, authorities at the Port of Antwerp seized 43 metric tons of cocaine. This was 21 percent higher than during the same period in 2022 and is on track to set an all-time high for the ninth consecutive year. Ecuador, Panama, and Brazil were the top three countries of shipping origin for the seized cocaine. Law enforcement officials estimated that seizures represent at most 20 percent, but possibly as little as five percent, of total cocaine trafficked through the Port of Antwerp and that 90 percent of what makes it through is transferred to the Netherlands for onward distribution in Europe. Rising levels of cocaine trafficking have led to increased levels of violence in the city of Antwerp, including most notably a drive-by shooting that killed an 11-year-old girl in January and a plan to kidnap former Justice Minister Vincent Van Quickenborne that authorities foiled in September 2022.

Belgium appointed its first drug commissioner in April 2023 as part of a broader effort announced in February 2023 to curb drug violence and reduce demand. The new position is intended to improve cooperation between services and facilitate legal and policy changes to counter drug trafficking and related violence. In conjunction with the new position, Belgium has stepped up efforts to cooperate with international partners against drug trafficking, including hosting a ministerial in Antwerp to combat transnational organized crime on June 5. Belgium's increased cooperation with the United States led to the July 19 announcement of U.S. sanctions against three Belgian nationals for international drug trafficking. The United States and Belgium have fully operational extradition and mutual legal assistance agreements.

Belize

A. Introduction

In 2023, law enforcement authorities discovered small coca plantations and makeshift clandestine laboratories in remote areas of Belize for the first time. Narco-aircraft landings decreased significantly; however transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) continued to use Belize to transit narcotics from South America to the United States. Maritime law enforcement struggles to detect and intercept narcotics transshipped through Belizean waters. Though limited radar capabilities and rugged, remote terrain continue to hinder quick responses to illicit air track incursions in southern Belize, a United States-donated special mission aircraft helps coordinate and support operations. Belize's primary domestic-used drug is still marijuana, with marginal use of cocaine and crack. Gang affiliation and drug trafficking underlie most homicides in Belize. The presence of Mexican drug cartels has become more evident in the communities on the Belize-Mexico border.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

Belize significantly strengthened its legislative base for countering transnational organized crime by passing the Civil Asset Recovery and Unexplained Wealth Act in 2023. This Act establishes a framework to investigate and prosecute persons, including high level government officials, who possess assets and wealth above their legal means of income.

In line with the recommendations from the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF), the Government amended the Misuse of Drugs Act in 2023 to increase penalties for persons found guilty of drug related offenses. The amendment increased summary offense penalties from a maximum imprisonment of two years to 10 years with fines increasing from \$10,000 to \$125,000; imprisonment for indictable offenses increased from 10 to 20 years with fines raised from \$25,000 to \$500,000.

Belize has been a member of INTERPOL since 1987. Belize and the United States signed an extradition treaty in March 2000. The United States facilitates continued dialogue between the Department of Justice and the Belizean Attorney General on extradition matters. In July 2023, Belize's Extradition Act was modified to provide reciprocity with the United States and Mexico. Reciprocity requests for all other nations will be based on a new process which mirrors a Commonwealth model.

Belize's effort to enhance public safety and citizen security is reflected by the nine percent budget increase for the Ministry of Home Affairs in the 2023 budget. In a collaborative effort with the United States, Belize allocated land and is seeking funding for constructing a permanent base for the Anti-Narcotics Unit (ANU).

The capabilities of the existing Airborne Extensible Relay Over-Horizon Network (AERONet) communication system were enhanced by the United States' donation of an MC-208 Guardian special mission aircraft. The aircraft provides the Joint Intelligence Operation Center (JIOC) and operational units with improved communication in remote areas. Belize faces challenges with deploying the MC-208 due to limited financial resources for fuel and maintenance, and uses the platform primarily for reconnaissance and operations.

The Customs and Excise Department (CED) has reported an increase in importation of narcotics from the United States through consolidated mail shipments. The United States provided portable x-ray scanners to the CED and the Mobile Interdiction Team, a specialized unit within the Belize Police Department, to enhance cargo inspections.

2. Supply Reduction

Illicit drug trends changed with the discovery and eradication of four coca plantations containing an estimated 121,000 coca plants and two clandestine laboratories, a first for Belize. There was a decrease in narco-aircraft landings with only one known landing in 2023, compared to 14 in 2021 and six in 2022; contacts attribute the decrease in part to collaboration with counterparts in Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras. The JIOC coordinated and deployed joint enforcement teams to conduct operations and reconnaissance. The JIOC also manages the AERONet system and

collaborates with the Belize Defense Force's Airwing, coordinating the use of aircraft to enhance communications in remote areas.

Belize's terrain, culture, and small population hinders law enforcement efforts and makes undercover operations and recruiting confidential sources difficult. As of August 2023, Belize intercepted 171 kilograms (kg) of marijuana, 2.5 kg of crack, 10.9 kg of cocaine, 15 grams of methamphetamine, and made 800 arrests for drug offenses.

The government did not identify or intercept any precursor chemicals in 2023, but in April 2023 the Customs and Excise department confiscated 98 fentanyl test strips imported from the United States through a consolidated shipment, which was the first fentanyl-related seizure in Belize.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

The National Drug Abuse Control Council (NDACC), under the oversight of the Ministry of Health, is responsible for addressing drug use in Belize. NDACC supervises two rehabilitation centers funded primarily through community assistance and donor support. NDACC is mandated to educate primary and secondary students about the danger of drug use. NDACC collaborates with stakeholders including the Community Policing Unit, Ministry of Health, fire department, National Institute for Culture and History, town councils, and child advisory boards.

The ANU extended its functions to include community outreach to build confidence in the police. These engagements highlight the roles and function of police officers, education on drug legislation, the dangers of being a narcotics officer, and trafficking trends.

4. Corruption

Belize does not encourage or facilitate illicit drug production or distribution, nor is it involved in laundering the proceeds of illicit drug sales. To address the issues of endemic corruption, however, the United States is partnering with the Belizean government to strengthen anticorruption efforts, including judicial reforms. Belize acceded to the United Nations Convention against Corruption in December 2016

and is working to ratify it. Belize implemented a series of legislative reforms to assist in the fight against corruption, including the Money Laundering and Terrorism Prevention Amendment; Electronic Transfer of Funds Crime Bill; Misuse of Drug Act Amendment; Companies Amendment Bill; and Tax Administration and Procedure Amendment Bill. In 2023, Belize amended legislation to comply with CFATF's 40 recommendations and Special Recommendations on terrorist financing.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

The United States continues to support capacity building and provides equipment to Belize's security and judicial institutions through the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI). CARSI funding is aimed at fighting illicit drug production and trafficking and combatting key drivers of corruption and transnational crime, complementing other U.S. efforts such as those focused on assisting vulnerable populations displaced by drug trafficking, violence, and crime.

Belize and the United States have been party to a bilateral agreement to suppress illicit trafficking by sea since 1992, which includes pursuit and boarding, shipriders, entry to investigate, over-flight, order to land, and for the use of third-party platforms.

The United States supports Belize in sharing data via the Advance Passenger Information System. The United States also supports Belize's membership in the Regional Border Intelligence and Collaboration Center in El Salvador. U.S. support also includes training on chemical diversion investigations, emerging trends in illicit synthetic drugs, and production techniques.

D. Conclusion

Belize continues to make strides to deter, interdict, and prosecute transnational crimes with the implementation of new laws and strengthened regional collaboration, although risks threaten to outstrip Belize's capacity. Belize needs to foster a stronger domestic multi-agency approach to build trust and confidence between agencies to effectively counter narcotic activities in Belize, which would lead to increased intercepts, detention, and conviction of criminal figures.

Bolivia

A. Introduction

Bolivia remains the third-largest source of cocaine in the world according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and is a major transit country for Peruvian cocaine. Most cocaine originating in Bolivia is consumed domestically or exported to other Latin American countries either for local consumption or for onward transit from those countries to West Africa and Europe. Peruvian cocaine loads arriving in Bolivia are also destined to Venezuela, Central America, and Mexico with the United States as final destination. On September 15, 2023, the United States determined that Bolivia failed demonstrably to adhere to its obligations under international counternarcotics agreements and the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. This determination was based, in part, on the Bolivian government's inability to reduce illicit coca cultivation and safeguard the country's licit coca market from criminal exploitation. Bolivia was granted a National Interest Waiver allowing certain U.S. foreign assistance to continue.

The Bolivian government maintains a legal coca market in recognition of coca's traditional significance in Bolivia. According to a 2013 European Union (EU)-funded study, less than 14,705 hectares (ha) are needed to support the demand for traditional and medicinal coca. The Bolivian government passed legislation in 2017 increasing legal coca cultivation from 12,000 to 22,000 ha. UNODC estimated for the 2022 calendar year that 29,890 ha were cultivated in Bolivia, 36 percent more than the legal limit and more than double the amount needed for traditional and medicinal usage. Illegal drug use in Bolivia is considered low compared to the United States; however, use of synthetic recreational drugs and combining synthetics with coca leaf is increasing.

There were reports of increased activity in Bolivia by the Brazilian criminal organization, Primeiro Comando da Capital, and Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua, posing significant new challenges for controlling illicit drug trafficking in Bolivia. UNODC noted the Chapare region (in Cochabamba Department) and several locations in the Department of Beni were effectively controlled by narcotraffickers.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

The Vice Ministry for Social Defense and Controlled Substances (VMSD), under the Ministry of Government, is mandated to combat drug trafficking, regulate coca production, advance coca eradication and drug prevention, and execute rehabilitation programs. The Special Counter-Narcotics Police Force (FELCN), with 1,250 personnel, reports to the VMSD. The Joint Eradication Task Force conducts manual coca eradication with 1,700 personnel.

The Directorate of Support for the Prevention of Drug Use, Control of Illicit Traffic in Controlled Substances and Surplus Coca (DIPREVCON) reports to VMSD. DIPREVCON coordinates and funds drug enforcement operations across all Ministry of Government offices. DIPREVCON had a budget of \$40 million in 2023, up from \$21.92 million in 2022 and \$30.65 million in 2021. The near doubling of the budget in 2023 was for emergency servicing of aircraft devoted to fighting narcotrafficking. Bolivia currently receives most of its foreign counternarcotics financial support from the EU; however, the EU plans to end direct budgetary support in 2025.

Bolivia coordinates bilaterally and regionally on counternarcotics but does not pursue cooperation with the United States. In August 2023, Minister of Government Carlos Eduardo del Castillo signed an agreement with Chilean president Gabriel Boric to stop illicit drug and contraband vehicle trafficking across the Chilean-Bolivian border. Bolivia coordinated more than 100 joint counternarcotics operations with Peru that yielded 410 kilograms (kg) of drugs seized, and 75 operations with Chile that yielded 440 kg of drugs seized.

Bolivia requested in June 2023 that the World Health Organization remove coca leaf from the list of controlled substances. The review will likely happen in 2024, at which point a recommendation will be sent to the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs for next steps. In July 2023, the Bolivian Minister of Defense signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the government of Iran to increase border security and combat narcotrafficking.

The United States and Bolivia are parties to a 1995 extradition treaty that permits the extradition of nationals for the most serious offenses, including drug trafficking. Bolivia and the United States do not have a bilateral Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty but can request assistance through various multilateral conventions to which both are signatories.

2. Supply Reduction

Through December 2023, FELCN destroyed 97 cocaine hydrochloride processing labs and 766 rustic cocaine labs, a 76 percent increase and 24 percent increase, respectively, from 2022. FELCN reported seizing 11.6 metric tons (MT) of cocaine base and 12.6 MT of cocaine hydrochloride in 2023, a 14.5 percent increase and 23 percent increase respectively from 2022. FELCN arrested 3,453 individuals on drug-related offenses in 2023. In 2023, FELCN reported confiscating 51 aircraft involved in drug trafficking, compared to 99 seized in 2022.

On January 26, 2023, the government of Bolivia announced plans to eradicate 10,000 ha of excess coca by 2024. Some experts believe that at least 11,000 ha of coca must be eradicated yearly to see a net reduction in coca cultivation. As of December 2023, Bolivian authorities reported eradicating 10,302 ha of coca, exceeding their goal by 3 percent.

UNODC is supporting an alternative development project in La Asunta to transition farmers from coca to coffee. UNODC received \$2 million from the EU and \$7.6 million from the Republic of Korea to expand this project to other regions.

UNODC observed increased seizures of synthetics and an increasing use of combining coca leaf with synthetics for recreational drug use. Based on these increases, Bolivia started to track and report on synthetic drug seizures; however, the government has not articulated a policy for scheduling new psychoactive substances or developed a plan for combatting synthetics.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

According to UNODC, illicit drug consumption is low in Bolivia relative to other countries. Bolivia has approximately 80 drug treatment and rehabilitation centers,

the majority of which are run by non-government organizations. Two public treatment centers are available, one in Tarija and the other in Santa Cruz. UNODC officials noted that in 2021, a Cochabamba treatment center for drug addiction saw a rise in patients as young as nine years old addicted to synthetic illicit drugs.

4. Corruption

Senior Bolivian officials acknowledge serious corruption in the judiciary and police. UNODC, through funding from the EU, signed an agreement with the Ministry of Government to fight corruption in the FELCN. UNODC, with funding from Canada and in collaboration with the FELCN, initiated a new AirCop unit in August 2023 at El Alto International airport to fight police corruption and increase interdictions of illegal drugs. UNODC continues to facilitate an AirCop program at the Viru Viru airport in Santa Cruz; however, in June 2023 a half ton of cocaine was discovered on a flight from Bolivia to Madrid, highlighting the continued challenge of fighting corruption among police, airport administrators, customs, and airline personnel.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

The United States does not have a counterdrug presence in Bolivia. With the EU, the United States continues to fund a UNODC-led coca eradication-monitoring project, which aims to independently validate government eradication efforts for the international community. In 2023, Bolivia participated in seven in-person courses at the U.S.-supported International Law Enforcement Academy to strengthen capacity in combatting transnational crime.

D. Conclusion

Bolivia remains the third-largest source of coca and cocaine in the world – behind Colombia and Peru – and a major transit country for Peruvian cocaine. More work is needed to adequately control coca cultivation and stop cocaine production and trafficking. Given the continued concern about synthetic illicit drugs, the government of Bolivia may need to increase its efforts to interdict synthetic drugs. It is not yet clear how the bilateral MOU with Iran to fight trafficking will affect Bolivia's law enforcement efforts.

Brazil

Brazil, which shares borders with the three largest cocaine producing countries in the world, is both a destination and transit point for illegally trafficked narcotics. Cocaine interdictions in Brazil have included both aerial and maritime shipments destined for the United States, Africa, and Europe. Transnational drug trafficking organizations, especially the “Primeiro Comando da Capital” (PCC) but also the “Comando Vermelho” (CV), are Brazil’s primary national security threat. The PCC is active in at least 16 countries including the United States, according to Brazil’s Federal Police (PF). The CV is active in the state of Rio de Janeiro, Bahia, Amapa, Roraima and Amazonas and expanding to Europe. Domestic drug use and addiction is a major challenge in Brazil, which is second only to the United States in cocaine consumption. Synthetic cannabinoid seizures have grown steadily, and there has been a fivefold increase in its reported use. Brazil established its first Early Warning System in 2021 to enable effective responses to the emergence of New Psychoactive Substances.

The first nine months of 2023 saw a slight decrease in counterdrug operations and seizures of cocaine and other illicit drugs. Through September 2023, the PF seized 57 metric tons (MT) of cocaine, 284 MT of marijuana, 407,908 units of synthetic drugs (including methamphetamine, LSD, ecstasy, and amphetamine), a slight decrease over the same period in 2022. As of October 2023, the PF eradicated 991 hectares of cannabis plants in Paraguay, in coordination with the Paraguayan Federal Police. Tetracaine, which is often added to cocaine, is subject to special control by the Brazilian National Health Surveillance Agency. Authorities reported seizures of expired medically diverted fentanyl ampules in 2023, resulting in more government attention to fentanyl. Brazil takes a holistic approach to drug treatment and has programs to reintegrate recovering addicts into society, but its programs are not yet commensurate with the size of the addicted population.

Bilateral extradition and mutual legal assistance treaties are in force between the United States and Brazil. The 2008 United States-Brazil Memorandum of Understanding on Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement provides the framework for capacity building in Brazilian federal and state agencies to combat illicit drug trafficking. The United States works closely with Brazilian law enforcement to counter transnational organized crime. On February 26, 2023, U.S.-trained PF officers seized approximately two MT of cocaine in

Mato Grosso state, where traffickers use small farms and aircraft to transport cocaine to northern Brazil for transfer onto ships. On September 2, 2023, U.S.-trained PF officers seized two MT of cocaine from a boat navigating in the Amazon region. On September 19, 2023, U.S.-trained PF officials seized 3.6 MT of coca paste from a vessel off the coast of Recife, destined for Sierra Leone, the largest ever seizure in Brazilian territorial waters.

Burma

A. Introduction

Burma is a major source of illicit heroin and methamphetamine. Porous borders with the People's Republic of China, Laos, India, Bangladesh, and Thailand ease the shipment of precursor chemicals, facilitate production, and allow the trafficking of synthetic drugs to and from Burma. Socioeconomic challenges, the presence of well-armed ethnic organizations, and political instability caused by the February 1, 2021, military coup d'état, has allowed for increased production and domestic consumption of illicit drugs in Burma over the last few years. Corruption and weak law enforcement worsened after the 2021 coup. A weak and complicated criminal justice system has enabled Burma's illicit economies to flourish, including the drug trade. Since the February 2021 coup, the United States has curtailed engagement with regime officials and ceased all law enforcement cooperation.

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has reported that Burma remains the top source of methamphetamine and is the largest opium poppy cultivator in the world. Organized criminal enterprises, with the help of experienced chemists, produce higher quality methamphetamine near the porous borders and other areas beyond the regime's control.

Drugs produced in Burma are trafficked throughout the region, with routes extending beyond Southeast Asia to Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. Burma is not a major source or transit country for drugs entering the United States.

Psychoactive substances or "party drugs" such as Happy Water, Happy 5, ketamine, and ecstasy are increasingly popular among Burma's youth. Consumption of amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) is more common among migrant workers and internally displaced communities. Easy access to these drugs ensured widespread domestic drug consumption.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

The Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control (CCDAC) is the military regime State Administration Council's designated inter-ministerial coordinating body. The regime Minister for Home Affairs is the Committee's Chair, and the Commander of Myanmar Police Force's Drug Enforcement Division is the Joint Secretary.

In April 2023, CCDAC coordinated a workshop on oversight of restricted chemicals. The chair of CCDAC announced the reformation of a central committee, with 19-members and 11 work committees to restrict, supervise and inspect the movement of precursor chemicals across the country.

The regime police force's Drug Enforcement Division (DED) is the primary drug interdiction unit, though joint interdiction operations with the military are common. DED expanded one sub-division X-ray Machine Unit, deployed in Mandalay Region, for a total of 11 sub-divisions across the country. DED seeks to set up six new Anti-Narcotics Task Forces squads, specialized in utilizing X-ray machines. Only four ANTF X-ray Task Forces were formed as of September 2023, comprising 69 ANTFs squads nationwide.

The Myanmar Police Force has been consistently understaffed. The problem worsened because of public worker strikes and walk outs after the 2021 coup. DED personnel claim approximately 1,400 personnel remain, though the number of authorized positions is 3,000.

There is no legal framework to protect whistleblowers or enable complex investigations. Drug cases often conclude without pursuing high-ranking suspects. The regime police force maintains relationships with its counterparts in Thailand, Lao PDR, India, Australia, the Philippines, and the People's Republic of China.

The regime Ministry of Legal Affairs provides oversight on all criminal drug prosecutions in Burma. Internal armed conflict and political instability hinder drug investigations and prosecutions. The regime criminal justice system continues to

prioritize cases against the pro-democracy movement and have accused members of the movement of drug-trafficking. Non-state actors also play a role in the justice sector. Some groups prosecute criminal activity in areas outside of regime control, including ethnic armed groups and pro-democracy armed forces like the People's Defense Forces.

Burma's law enforcement and justice institutions lack experience and understanding of extradition and mutual legal assistance mechanisms. The regime's fear of foreign government meddling limits cooperation with international law enforcement. The regime leadership admits that Burma cannot address transnational organized crime alone. In a June speech on the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, the Chair of the CCDAC admitted the production and trafficking of illicit drugs has not declined.

Burma has a colonial-era extradition treaty with the United States that has not been used in many years.

2. Supply Reduction

According to the 2023 UNODC Opium Survey, farmers cultivated an estimated 47,100 hectares of opium poppy, 18 per cent more than in 2022. Burma is not a significant source of illicit fentanyl. Primary trafficking routes are from Shan State to Thailand, China, India, and Bangladesh by land; and to Southeast Asia, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Japan by sea.

The regime CCDAC destroyed over \$446 million in narcotics it seized on the 2023 International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, compared to \$642 million in 2022. Among the drugs destroyed were 20 types of narcotic drugs and 16 types of precursor chemicals. The CCDAC announced the regime is committed to combatting cultivation and production of opium. Opium seizures spiked in 2023, increasing by 70 percent compared with the same period in 2022.

From January to December 2023 the regime police reported seizing 17.8 metric tons (MT) of crystal methamphetamine, 253 million amphetamine tablets, and 1,873 kilograms (kg) of heroin. The value of drugs seized in 2023 totaled approximately \$503 million.

Regime media reported that from January to December 2023, there were 6,539 drug-related cases and 8,853 prosecutions; many prosecutions relate to older cases. Following the regime's motto "no precursor, no drugs," a nationwide operation was launched in January to prevent the import of controlled precursor chemicals. Through June 2023, the operation prosecuted 312 cases related to controlled chemicals and authorities seized over \$190 million worth of them.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

Domestic consumption of illicit drugs is high and growing, although official statistics are not available. The Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), under the regime Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (MSWRR), is responsible for rehabilitation, reintegration, and follow up services to people with substance use disorders. It manages 14 drug rehabilitation centers across the country. The DOR is under-staffed and lacks resources, however, and its work dramatically declined due to restrictions and limited engagement from the UN and international organizations since the coup.

The Drug Dependency Treatment and Research Unit, under the regime Ministry of Health, provides methadone maintenance therapy, drug detox services, and opioid substitution therapy at public hospitals. The regime Ministry of Health has established 29 major drug treatment centers, 56 minor drug treatment centers, and 86 methadone clinics.

The regime has not implemented the amended Narcotic Drugs Psychotropic Substance Law of 2018, focused on addiction as a public health issue.

Some regime officials, including medical and social service providers, joined the civil disobedience movement (CDM) to protest the coup. Subsequently, the regime replaced some personnel with new recruits lacking sufficient training.

Burma relies on the United Nations, international and local non-governmental organizations, and community-based entities to provide drug demand reduction services. The United States continues to implement localized public programming, while avoiding interaction with the military regime, including by promoting public awareness about prevention and recovery programs.

4. Corruption

Burma does not as a matter of policy encourage or facilitate the illicit production or distribution of drugs, or the laundering of proceeds from illicit transactions. Corruption is widespread, however, and illicit proceeds from the drug trade fuel crime and armed conflict.

The regime's Anti-Corruption Commission has focused exclusively on targeting its political opponents with corruption charges since the coup.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

The United States suspended cooperation on counternarcotics with Burma on February 1, 2021. The United States previously partnered with the police on law enforcement intelligence sharing, joint investigations, training, and material assistance. Burma has not attended U.S.-supported International Law Enforcement Academy programs since the coup. The United States maintains an information sharing relationship with the regime police force's Drug Enforcement Division.

Without engaging with the regime officials, the United States promotes community resilience through evidence-based drug prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation to civil society organizations (CSOs) by partnering with UNODC. In addition, UNODC conducts the annual opium poppy cultivation survey, the only reliable data to analyze the opium production and trafficking trends. Similarly, the Colombo Plan provides technical assistance to non-regime affiliated health care and rehabilitation service providers through virtual trainings utilizing the Universal Treatment and Prevention Curriculums.

D. Conclusion

Burma remains a major source of illicit drugs throughout Southeast Asia. Its domestic drug consumption is widespread, and illicit proceeds from the trade threatens internal and regional stability. The UNODC report on synthetic drug supply in East and Southeast Asia, launched in June, stated 151 metric tons of methamphetamine were seized in 2022, demonstrating the region is a global methamphetamine hotspot. Most of these drugs originate in Burma's Shan State, part of the region's notorious Golden Triangle.

The use of non-controlled chemicals in the clandestine production of methamphetamines creates significant challenges for law enforcement and regulatory authorities, especially in the non-regime-controlled area operated by non-state actors. An increasingly fragile economy and often hostile working environment for law enforcement make stopping the manufacture of narcotics even more difficult.

After the 2021 coup, criminal justice actors and local administrative authorities focused on suppressing and prosecuting pro-democracy activists, causing a collapse in faith toward courts and law enforcement, subsequently causing significant obstacles to the interdiction, prosecuting and investigation of drug crimes.

In addition, the regime's Organization Registration Law of 2022 requires CSOs, including "welfare associations," to declare funding sources and requires other disclosures. The regulation, designed to monitor CSOs' activities, hinders their ability to assist vulnerable sectors of substance use population, such as in the internally displaced and migrant-worker camps, a growing population due to conflict.

The scale of Burma's illicit drug problem is vast and growing, and the United States remains a committed partner for the people of Burma as they confront counternarcotics issues at the local level and with the assistance of the international community.

Cabo Verde

The combined factors of Cabo Verde's mid-Atlantic location, long coastline, and vast and largely unpatrolled maritime zone allow narcotraffickers to transit cocaine, cannabis, and other drugs to the African continent and Europe. Support from the United States and other donors is helping improve the capacity of law enforcement agencies to interdict illicit drug shipments. For example, the United States provided robust and varied training in 2023 to Cabo Verdean law enforcement and armed forces to enhance air and maritime security, and the two countries signed a customs mutual assistance agreement, which will assist with information sharing. The United States also helped Cabo Verde establish joint interagency units tasked with securing the borders and dismantling illicit trafficking networks. The units are comprised of members from Cabo Verde's Customs service, Judicial Police, and National Police. These units benefitted from specialized trainings along with advanced technologies to identify illicit trafficking occurring at air and sea ports of entry, as well as in the maritime domain. Through July 2023, authorities seized 655 kilograms (KG) of cocaine and 9.2 metric tons (MT) kilograms of cannabis.

The Attorney General's Office reported 341 new drug crime cases during the year ending July 2023, and 1,125 total cases including those pending from the previous year, 384 of which were resolved. A July 2023 joint operation between Cabo Verde's Judicial Police and the Spanish law enforcement that yielded a seizure of over 500 kg of cocaine demonstrated the government's will to combat drug trafficking and related crimes. The Maritime Security Operations Center in Praia and the Rescue Coordination Center in Mindelo provide oversight of Cabo Verde's maritime territory, though Cabo Verde lacks an integrated radar system and vessels capable of interdiction at sea.

Cabo Verde's corruption level is relatively low. The government has integrated its drug policy with security, justice, and health initiatives. However, the government lacks resources for demand reduction and preventing and combating street crime. Recidivism for drug crimes is high.

The United States and Cabo Verde do not currently have a bilateral mutual legal assistance treaty or an extradition treaty. However, Cabo Verde is still able to extradite non-Cabo Verdean nationals to the United States, and it is a party to multilateral law enforcement conventions that enable providing mutual legal assistance to the United States.

Cambodia

Transnational criminal organizations (TCOs), primarily from Asia, use Cambodia as a transit and destination country, primarily for methamphetamine and heroin from Burma. TCOs are increasingly using Cambodia as a transshipment point. The country is also increasingly targeted for the illicit manufacture of synthetic drugs, specifically ketamine and other amphetamine-type stimulants. TCOs operating in Cambodia are typically comprised of People's Republic of China (PRC), Taiwanese, Cambodian and Thai nationals, and African criminal groups. Cambodia-based TCOs import precursor chemicals, primarily from the PRC, to manufacture illicit drugs.

Ketamine is the most frequently seized drug. In one case alone (August 2023), authorities seized 785 kilograms (kg) of the drug, although data on drug use shows methamphetamine is of greater concern as a public health threat. For example, in 2022, of the 4,808 drug users in treatment, 99.4 percent abused crystal methamphetamine while the remainder used ketamine, inhalants, marijuana, methamphetamine tablets, or other unspecified drugs. Heroin primarily transits Cambodia destined for other regional markets, with minimal domestic consumption. Marijuana is widely used across all levels of society.

During the first six months of 2023, the National Authority for Combatting Drugs (NACD) reported that Cambodian law enforcement arrested 7,230 drug-related suspects, including 136 foreigners. Cambodian authorities seized approximately 535 kg of crystal methamphetamine (52 percent increase from 2022) suggesting the market for crystal methamphetamine abuse has expanded. Authorities also seized 0.63 kg of methamphetamine tablets, 109 kg of ketamine, 159 kg of ecstasy (41 percent increase from 2022), and 142 kg of heroin (a 61 percent increase). Other seizures included Nimetazepam (1.9 kg), dried cannabis (8 kg), marijuana plants (17,950), and controlled/non-controlled chemicals that can be used for the manufacture of illicit drugs (837 kg). On June 28, 2023, as part of Cambodia's International Anti-Drug Day, authorities destroyed approximately 5.5 tons of drugs seized during the first five months of the year.

U.S.-provided law enforcement training, coupled with the improved efficiency of the Cambodia Anti-Drugs Department, has resulted in substantial increases in the number of drug-related investigations, arrests, and seizures.

Cambodia does not have a bilateral mutual legal assistance treaty or extradition agreement with the United States, although it has acceded to relevant multilateral conventions that enable such cooperation.

Canada

Canada's Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Serious and Organized Crime & Border Integrity Unit, has identified fentanyl production within Canada, stating that the majority is being trafficked to Australia and New Zealand, and also within Canada for domestic consumption. In 2023, transnational criminal organizations trafficked cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, other synthetic drugs, and prescription drugs (some of which transited the United States) to Canada for domestic consumption. Canada and the United States cooperate on drug control efforts through federal arrangements and interactions between provincial, municipal, and tribal entities. Bilateral collaboration also occurs pursuant to the U.S.-Canada Joint Action Plan to Combat Opioids which formally launched in January 2020. The U.S.-Canada Roadmap for a Renewed U.S.-Canada Partnership held a second meeting of the Cross Border Crime Forum in 2023, focusing on a host of issues including fentanyl and opioids. Canada also cooperates trilaterally with the United States and Mexico in the North American Drug Dialogue and the Trilateral Fentanyl Committee and is a member of the Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats.

The Government of Canada administers the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (CDSA), which establishes a framework for the possession, production, and distribution of controlled substances that can be used in the manufacture of illegal drugs. British Columbia's three-year exemption under the CDSA to remove criminal penalties for individuals who possess 2.5 grams or less of opioids, cocaine, methamphetamine, and MDMA for personal use went into effect January 31, 2023. There were 1,455 toxic drug deaths in British Columbia from January to July 2023, which puts the province on pace to exceed the 2,383 deaths recorded in 2022. Unregulated drug toxicity is the leading cause of death in British Columbia for persons aged 10 to 59, accounting for more deaths than homicides, suicides, accidents, and natural diseases combined.

The Government of Canada committed approximately \$261.3 million over the next five years in its 2023 federal budget to support a renewed Canadian Drug and Substances Strategy to address the opioid and overdose crisis. In May 2023, Parliament amended Bill C-37 to streamline the process for communities who want to open supervised consumption sites; prohibited the unregistered importation of designated devices such as pill presses and encapsulators that may be used in the illicit production of controlled substances; and, in

order to stop illicit trafficking of substances such as fentanyl through the mail system, amended the Customs Act to remove an exception that prevented border officers from opening mail weighing 30 grams or less. Parliament also amended the CDSA to allow temporary scheduling of controlled substances and faster disposition of drugs and substances by law enforcement.

Canada is the world's second largest consumer of prescription opioids per capita. The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) reported 1,905 opioid-related deaths between January and March 2023. Health Canada highlighted multi-drug toxicity as a contributing factor to the opioid crisis, as 48 percent of overdose deaths during the same period in 2023 involved a stimulant. Health Canada has also listed sedatives/hypnotics, stimulants, and opioid class drugs as the most common co-occurring substances in fentanyl. The Canadian Border Services Agency seized over 61.5 metric tons (MT) of illicit drugs between April 2022 and March 2023.

Canada legalized the production, distribution, sale, and possession of cannabis for non-medical purposes in 2018 but maintains criminal penalties for the possession of unlicensed cannabis. Statistics Canada estimated around 66 percent of household expenditures on cannabis were made in the legal market by the end of 2021-2022. During FY 2023, U.S. Customs and Border Protection seized 7.5 MT of marijuana on the northern border, compared to 10.5 MT during FY 2022. In the past year, Canadian law enforcement conducted several high-profile raids on fentanyl labs in 2023 in British Columbia, Alberta, and Ontario. In April, Vancouver Police Department raided a fentanyl super lab that possessed approximately \$5.9 million in illicit drugs. In August, police in Ontario dismantled a large network of opioid producers through Project Odeon in the Greater Toronto Area. In November, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in British Columbia raided a large fentanyl lab and seized 2.5 million doses of fentanyl.

In 2023, the United States and Canada used asset-sharing, mutual legal assistance, and extradition and customs treaties to exchange forfeited assets, conduct extraditions, and cooperate on law enforcement matters. Additional measures Canada could undertake include enhancing information sharing and cooperation on investigations into drug trafficking rings, possible seizures, and conducting a joint mapping exercise of worldwide precursor chemical movements; aligning our import and export control regimes; increasing collaboration with the United States on money laundering investigations to target the illicit

proceeds of drug traffickers; strengthening coordination that targets real estate and cryptocurrencies used in criminal transactions; and increasing cyber investigations of dark net vendors of illicit substances.

People's Republic of China

A. Introduction

The People's Republic of China's (PRC) geographic location, large chemical industry, and expanding economy have all contributed to its status as a major source of precursor chemicals, new psychoactive substances (NPS), and synthetic drugs, including methamphetamine. The PRC shares borders with drug source countries in both Southeast and Southwest Asia and remains a destination and transit country for methamphetamine and heroin produced in these areas. Domestic PRC criminal organizations traffic illicit drugs within the PRC as well as to international markets, and PRC authorities have noted the presence of international drug trafficking organizations originating from Mexico and Southeast Asia operating in the country. In addition to its porous borders, its numerous coastal cities with high-volume seaports and vast network of international airports make the PRC an ideal hub for drug and precursor chemical production and trafficking.

Limited oversight of the PRC's massive chemical and pharmaceutical industries results in a permissive environment for the illicit production of methamphetamine and ketamine. While the PRC officially reports that drug use is on the decline, domestic use of these synthetic drugs is known to remain prevalent. According to U.S. and international law enforcement agencies, the PRC remains a major source of precursor chemicals sold in North America, which are often purchased via the internet and shipped to overseas customers. Chemical alterations of scheduled drugs to circumvent existing anti-drug laws have hampered interdiction efforts.

Confronting the opioid crisis in the United States requires effective bilateral U.S.-PRC counterdrug and law enforcement cooperation, such as in 2019 when the PRC implemented class-wide controls of all forms of fentanyl, partly in response to a U.S. request. However, PRC traffickers then adapted their strategies, shifting to shipments of synthetic opioid precursor chemicals to manufacturers in Mexico, Central America, and Canada. Even though the United States has detected or seized almost no shipments of fentanyl or fentanyl analogues coming from the PRC since September 2019, fentanyl-related overdoses and seizures have continued to increase in the United States in part because of these changes in trafficking strategies.

Mitigating the supply of synthetic precursors from the PRC to third countries for fentanyl and methamphetamine manufacturing and eventual shipment to illicit U.S. markets presents formidable challenges. Due to the large volume of precursor chemicals shipped from the PRC and used in the production of controlled substances, the United States designated the PRC as a “Major Drug Transit or Drug Producing Country” on September 15. The United States continues to call upon PRC law enforcement and chemical industry regulators to prevent these shipments from being diverted to the production of illicit drugs, particularly through implementing “Know Your Customer” standards. Trafficking by mislabeling cargo to bypass current laws and avoid detection is a challenge that tests law enforcement’s adaptability to new trafficking techniques.

On November 15, 2023, President Biden and PRC President Xi announced the resumption of bilateral cooperation to combat global illicit drug manufacturing and trafficking, including synthetic drugs like fentanyl, and the establishment of a working group for ongoing communication and law enforcement coordination on counternarcotics issues. The following day, the PRC issued a notice to its domestic industry advising on the enforcement of laws and regulations related to trade in precursor chemicals and pill press equipment. It will take sustained implementation of this new policy and a coordinated effort by the United States, PRC law enforcement, and third countries in the supply chain to combat the trafficking of synthetic opioid precursor chemicals and equipment for illicit narcotics production.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

The PRC’s drug control strategy focuses on prevention, education, illicit crop eradication, interdiction, rehabilitation, commercial regulation, and law enforcement. The National Narcotics Control Commission (NNCC) is the national drug control policy entity; the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) and provincial public security bureaus enforce NNCC policies and drug laws. The Anti-Smuggling Bureau within the General Administration of Customs is responsible for the enforcement of the PRC’s drug control laws at seaports, airports, and land border checkpoints. The PRC maintains bilateral drug control agreements with many countries and international organizations, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime,

and participates in a variety of international drug conferences and bilateral meetings. There is no extradition treaty between the PRC and the United States. The PRC and the United States are parties to a bilateral mutual legal assistance agreement that entered into force in 2001. Despite the existence of a mutual legal assistance agreement, many outstanding requests by both the United States and the PRC remained unfulfilled.

2. Supply Reduction

According to the NNCC's 2022 Annual Drug Report (published June 2023), PRC law enforcement investigated 35,000 drug-related cases, made 53,000 drug-related arrests, and seized 21.9 metric tons (MT) of illegal drugs in 2022. Investigations and arrests decreased from the previous year. PRC authorities also resolved 287 cases involving precursor chemicals, reflecting a 24.8% year-on-year increase. However, seizures amounted to 660.2 MT of precursor chemicals, representing a 48.5% year-on-year decrease.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

According to the NNCC, synthetic drugs – primarily methamphetamine – have surpassed heroin and other opioids as the PRC's primary domestic drug threat, though the NNCC also noted that polydrug use had increased. The PRC previously listed 431 kinds of drugs and scheduled fentanyl as a class, but New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) remain a problem. In addition, the NNCC noted etomidate, metomidate, and kratom leaf containing natural opioid properties were becoming more widespread. According to the NNCC's 2022 Annual Drug Report, the total number of registered illegal drug users in the PRC was just over 1.1 million, a 24.3 percent decrease year-on-year, but the actual number of drug users was estimated to be at least 14 million, according to 2015 state media reports. Of the reported registered drug users, 588,000 used methamphetamine, a 25.8 percent decrease year-on-year, 416,000 reportedly used heroin, a 25.2 percent decrease year-on-year, and 32,000 used ketamine, a 14.7 percent decrease year-on-year.

4. Corruption

The Ministry of Public Security has stated it takes allegations of drug-related corruption seriously and launches investigations when deemed appropriate. Despite efforts to stem drug-related corruption, corruption among provincial, prefectural, county, and district government officials continues to be a concern. The PRC does not, as a matter of government policy, encourage or facilitate illicit drug production or distribution, nor is it involved in laundering the proceeds of the sale of illicit drugs. Based on publicly available information, no senior PRC official at the central government level is known to have facilitated the illicit production or distribution of drugs since 2017. Similarly, no senior Chinese official from the central or provincial governments is known to have laundered proceeds from drug-related activities.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

As of November 2023, the United States and the PRC continued to have limited engagement on counterdrug matters at the working level. On November 15, however, the United States and PRC announced the launch of a counternarcotics working group to create a platform for policy and technical experts to discuss law enforcement efforts and exchange information on counternarcotics efforts going forward.

In the past, the two countries have worked through the Bilateral Drug Intelligence Working Group (BDIWG); the Counter Narcotics Working Group (CNWG); and a working group of chemists and experts. These working groups exchanged views and information on trends in drug abuse and trafficking; discussed pertinent laws, regulations, policies, and procedures in the respective countries; sought progress to address challenges in precursor chemical control; and identified mechanisms to cooperate on investigations and cases of mutual interest.

D. Conclusion

The United States and the PRC continue to have the potential for meaningful cooperation. Drug trafficking, manufacturing, diversion, and other drug-related crimes remain significant problems in the PRC, and precursor chemicals originating in the PRC contribute directly to the opioid crisis in the United States. The PRC should strengthen enforcement of chemical control regulations and take other measures to prevent the

diversion of drug precursors to illicit drug manufacturers and shipment of NPS directly to other countries. PRC law enforcement should assist U.S. law enforcement in tackling these new trafficking challenges.

Colombia

A. Introduction

Colombia remains the world's top cocaine producer and exporter as well as a source of heroin and marijuana. In 2022, the most recent period for which data is available, approximately 97 percent of the cocaine samples seized and tested in the United States were of Colombian origin. According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Colombian coca cultivation increased to 230,000 hectares (ha) in 2022, compared to 204,000 ha in 2021, a record high representing a 12.7 percent increase but a deceleration in annual growth. (UNODC previously reported an increase in coca cultivation from 143,000 ha in 2020 to 204,000 ha in 2021, a 43 percent jump.) UNODC reported a 24 percent increase in cocaine production potential, from 1,400 metric tons (MT) in 2021 to 1,738 MT in 2022.

The U.S. and Colombian governments continued counterdrug cooperation and reaffirmed their commitment to implementing the bilateral holistic strategy focused on integrated supply reduction, rural security and development, and countering environmental crimes. Colombia hosted the third U.S.-Colombia Counternarcotics Working Group (CNWG) in Bogota in September 2023. Colombian pledges at the CNWG included increased interdiction and comprehensive rural development. The Government of Colombia committed to continuing strategic eradication—forcibly eradicating industrial-sized coca plots but exempting small coca producers, to whom the government would offer voluntary eradication agreements. The United States and Colombia also made significant time-bound promises to combat money laundering, increase rural police, reduce drug demand in Colombia, and increase monitoring on illegal mining carried out by organized criminal groups. The two governments also agreed to broaden the metrics used to measure the sustainability of our joint comprehensive strategy.

Colombia reported seizing or assisting with the seizure of 766 MT of cocaine and cocaine base in 2022 and reported 841 MT in seizures from January to December 2023. The Colombian government eradicated 20,325 ha of coca from January to December 2023, 70 percent lower than the same period in 2022 (68,893 ha). Forced eradication continued, but often at a slower rate and it stopped completely in some communities

and protected areas like national parks. A May 2021 court decision outlawed forced eradication in parts of Nariño, which recorded the highest number of hectares of coca in 2022, according to the UNODC study. Colombian President Gustavo Petro deemphasized forced eradication with some members of his administration describing it as an inefficient tactic with little long-term utility and negative secondary effects. Additionally, Colombian forces were regularly called to respond to protests and address citizen security issues in urban centers, which limited overall eradication capacity throughout the year; the army stopped conducting forced eradication operations completely.

Total seizures of cocaine and cocaine base from January to December 2023 (841 MT) increased by 10 percent compared to the same period last year (766 MT), mostly due to security forces increasing joint and coordinated interdiction operations. Furthermore, Colombia's police and armed forces destroyed 5,260 labs through December 2023, 12 percent more than the same period in 2022 (4,707 labs).

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

Colombia struggles with persistent security, governance, and economic challenges in rural regions. While violence declined after the signing of the 2016 Peace Accord with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, other illegal armed groups expanded their territory from 2021 to 2022, according to data from Colombian NGO Fundacion Ideas Para la Paz (Ideas for Peace Foundation). Insufficient presence of police and justice personnel in rural Colombia weakens the rule of law and prevents the establishment of necessary security conditions for economic development initiatives to succeed. At the same time, a lack of access to basic goods including roads, education, healthcare, judicial capacity, land titling, credit, and licit markets in rural areas continues to fuel criminality. Coca cultivation and illegal mining thrive in rural areas in part due to a dearth of licit economic alternatives. The crop substitution program of the 2016 Peace Accord, which aims to transition coca growers to licit crops, remains stalled. A comprehensive, integrated approach to rural security and development is required to bring state presence and institutions to Colombia's long-neglected rural territories.

Colombia's new national drug policy, released in September 2023, balances rural development and counterdrug programs in an effort to address security and governance in rural areas. The policy's headline goal is to shift 50,000 of the estimated 115,000 small-scale coca-growing families to licit alternatives by 2026 and thereby reduce coca cultivation by 90,000 hectares. It promotes a whole-of-government and inter-institutional approach that is largely in line with the holistic U.S.-Colombia Counternarcotics Strategy.

However, implementation of the drug policy will face operational and budgetary hurdles. The Colombian government estimates the policy will cost \$5.2 billion drawn from different agencies, but this would not be new money. The government has not identified budget sources for the drug policy's implementation. Additionally, the policy lacks a high-level coordination mechanism to ensure its effective implementation in priority geographic areas, including rural zones with weak institutional presence. The strategy holds promise in addressing the institutional problems that limit security and economic development in rural Colombia, but the government needs to adequately fund and support implementation to ensure its success.

2. Supply Reduction

UNODC estimates coca cultivation in Colombia increased to 230,000 ha in 2022, compared to 204,000 ha in 2021. The Colombian Ministry of Justice reports police, military, and civilian contractors eradicated approximately 20,325 ha of coca nationwide from January to December 2023.

Along with strategic coca eradication, the Colombian government's drug control priorities include interdicting cocaine and precursor chemicals, dismantling criminal groups, and extraditing top drug traffickers to the United States. Colombian authorities reported that Colombian forces and international partners seized 841 MT of cocaine and cocaine base in Colombia and abroad during 2023.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

According to the Organization of American States (OAS) 2019 Report on Drug Use in the Americas (released every four years), Colombia has the fifth highest

consumption rate of cocaine and the sixth highest consumption rate of marijuana in Latin America. According to the Colombian government's 2019 National Household Consumption Study, the highest rates of cocaine use are among young people between the ages 18 and 24. That age group, along with people between the ages of 25 and 34, account for 64 percent of all consumers.

Colombia focuses treatment on youth substance abusers. The Colombian National Police prevention unit teaches drug prevention to school children nationwide. Colombia, with U.S. support, expanded its juvenile drug treatment court first piloted in Medellin to seven other cities. Colombia is also expanding restorative justice programs and is training drug prevention and treatment professionals in evidence-based practices through the U.S.-developed Universal Treatment and Prevention Curricula.

4. Corruption

The Colombian government does not, as a matter of policy, encourage or facilitate illicit drug production or distribution, nor is it involved in laundering the proceeds of the sales of illicit drugs. However, corruption remains a pervasive problem in Colombia. Illicit financial flows derived from organized crime and drug trafficking are key drivers of corruption in Colombia. Corruption in ports facilitates the transit of illicit drugs. Investigations into officials accused of bribery in exchange for public works contracts from the Brazilian construction firm Odebrecht are ongoing. Anti-corruption advocates and journalists reporting about corruption regularly face threats.

The government's new four-year National Development Plan, approved in May 2023, directs the government to create a national anti-corruption strategy. Additionally, the Colombian Congress ratified in October 2022 the Escazu Agreement, which strengthens access to information and transparency on the management of environmental protection funds, as well as whistleblower protections.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

In September 2021, the U.S. and Colombian governments agreed to implement a bilateral holistic counternarcotics strategy that focuses on supply reduction, rural

security and development, and countering environmental crimes. Both governments reaffirmed commitment to this strategy at the March 2023 High-Level Dialogue and again at the September 2023 CNWG. The United States provides counterdrug assistance to the Colombian police and military, the justice ministry, the offices of the attorney general and inspector general, the financial intelligence unit, and the judiciary. Bilateral cooperation on extraditions, drug, and money laundering investigations have resulted in hundreds of U.S. indictments and the extradition of high-level drug traffickers. Additionally, the 2016 Asset Sharing Agreement between the United States and Colombia permits the sharing of the proceeds of assets that are seized and forfeited by U.S. or Colombian law enforcement. To date, the United States has shared proceeds with Colombia on four occasions pursuant to the Agreement.

The United States works to strengthen Colombian institutions located in rural, conflict-affected areas. The focus includes reducing drug trafficking and supply; increasing citizen security; formalizing land titles; bolstering economically sustainable legal livelihoods and markets; expanding the permanent presence of, and confidence in, the police and other government institutions; environmental protection; promoting the rule of law; dismantling organized crime networks; and protecting human rights.

Through the U.S.-Colombia Action Plan on Regional Security Cooperation, Colombia's police and military build law enforcement capabilities and connections by training regional counterparts in countering transnational organized crime and drug trafficking. Colombia's Navy is a regional leader in coordinating the multinational interdiction operation "Campaign Orion" which, with U.S. support, targets illicit drug flows in land, air, maritime, and riverine environments. Since 2018, these operations have seized a combined total of 1,266 MT of cocaine, demonstrating Colombia's role as an international leader in counternarcotics.

D. Conclusion

Coca cultivation in Colombia continues to increase due to lack of rural development and security, as well as sustained or increasing demand in consumer countries. To prevent additional growth in coca cultivation, Colombia will need to dramatically expand rural development and security while continuing forced eradication, expanding voluntary eradication, and augmenting cocaine and precursor interdiction operations. Colombian

crop substitution and rural development programs also require strong commitment and funding to sustain reductions in coca cultivation. Further, the Colombian police and military have prevented hundreds of metric tons of drugs from reaching the United States annually at great financial and human cost to Colombian forces and eradicators. Colombia must field sufficient security resources to protect rural Colombians and achieve counternarcotics goals necessary to peace accord implementation.

Costa Rica

A. Introduction

Costa Rica is a hub for illicit drug trafficking due to its strategic location, extensive maritime jurisdiction, and resource-constrained security sector. In 2023, the country maintained its place among the top first-stop transshipment points for cocaine en route from South America to the United States and Europe.

The country is grappling with growing domestic drug consumption as drugs that previously transited its territory increasingly remain in Costa Rica and infiltrate the local market. This influx has led to a rise in turf battles among Costa Rican criminal organizations and enabled them to amass greater strength and influence as they benefit from increased revenues. This increased local drug trade played a significant role in the sharp increase in violence in 2023. The country's homicide rate increased in 2023 and is on pace to surpass by more than 40 percent the country's record high rate in 2022. As of September 30, 2023, there were 681 homicides nationally, more than the total number in all of 2022, including in the central valley and around several popular tourism regions.

Law enforcement seized relatively small quantities of synthetic narcotics pills in 2023 but saw growing signs of a domestic consumption market as well as emerging distribution channels. Law enforcement has identified several types of synthetic narcotics on the domestic market, including fentanyl and "tusi."

The homicide rate, reportedly at least in part driven by the significant drug trafficking in and through Costa Rica, increased across the country in 2023 and is on pace to surpass by more than 40 percent the country's record high rate of 12.6 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in 2022. Notably, while the coastal provinces of Limon and Puntarenas traditionally have homicides rates up to three times higher than the national rate and that trend is expected to continue in 2023, homicides from January to September 2023 increased across the country, including in the central valley and around several popular tourism regions.

Costa Rica collaborates closely with the United States in its efforts to professionalize its police force, enhance citizen security, and improve drug interdiction to address the

growing security challenges in the country. However, resource limitations constrain Costa Rican law enforcement services and pose substantial obstacles to their future success.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

With U.S. support, Costa Rica engaged in numerous police professionalization efforts in 2023, including leadership training, modernization of training facilities, expanded canine programs, and improved cooperation between national and local authorities. Costa Rica launched Operation Sovereignty in July, putting its security forces in charge of port security for the first time, beginning with the main commercial port of Moin on the Caribbean coast. This multi-agency effort to reduce drug trafficking through a key port includes increased scanning of cargo containers, with a goal of inspecting every container transiting the port.

Costa Rica's Coast Guard is a successful partner in maritime interdiction, conducting joint operations with the United States. However, ongoing professional development and support is required to ensure it can staff and maintain its fleet in the face of budget constraints.

The U.S.-supported helicopter program achieved new milestones in 2023, becoming the first program of its type to achieve initial maritime operations certification. In 2023 Costa Rica's Air Surveillance Police expanded a U.S.-supported Small Unmanned Aircraft System program to sixteen unmanned aircraft and a structured training and operations program, increasing its ability to conduct intelligence and law enforcement operations in remote regions.

In 2023, Costa Rica sought to address institutional capacity limitations, many of which result from budget and staffing constraints, with a renewed focus on management issues by the Ministry of Public Security and other Costa Rican entities, resulting in stronger internal controls on coordinating support requests and donated assets. Other areas of increased attention included vehicle fleet management, equipment control, and monitoring and evaluation.

The U.S.-Costa Rica extradition treaty has been in force since 1991.

2. Supply Reduction

Drugs continue to flow through Costa Rica, though the government makes concerted efforts to stop them. Maritime drug seizures on both the Pacific and Caribbean coasts are a major component of Costa Rica cooperation with the United States.

The U.S.-supported Vetted Unit in Costa Rica dismantled the country's first identified fentanyl laboratory and associated trafficking ring in operations in November 2023. The unit seized more than 1,200 fentanyl pills, powdered fentanyl and other synthetics, handguns, almost \$30,000 in currency, and arrested four subjects in the raids, following a year-long investigation.

Between January and September 2023, Costa Rica seized 36.4 metric tons (MT) of drugs, including 19.2 MT of cocaine and 17.2 MT of marijuana, and reported disrupting at least five international drug trafficking rings, working closely with the United States and regional partners. This represents a slight decrease from 41.57 MT in the same period in 2022, though changes in regional trends in maritime narcotics shipments account for some of the decrease.

Cocaine destined for Europe, and to a lesser extent the United States, transits the port of Moin, where U.S. support helps identify containers loaded with illicit drugs. The United States' technical support to port security efforts in 2023 included a new Costa Rican initiative to scan all cargo containers in Moin. Costa Rica partnered with a U.S. company to install two new container scanners at the port, with plans for additional machines at land and seaports in 2024.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

The Costa Rican Drug Institute oversees national anti-drug strategy and drug prevention programs. That agency developed the National Strategy on Drugs and Related Crimes, covering the period 2020 – 2030. The Institute on Alcohol and Drug Abuse offers treatment and prevention programs. Together with the Ministry of Education and the Costa Rican Drug Institute, several programs focus on prevention within schools, including by training teachers and administrators to identify signs of

drug use and provide support to families. Difficulty coordinating among government agencies, however, means that considerable gaps remain. Drug-related crimes are serious offenses in Costa Rica, although laws against personal consumption are rarely enforced.

4. Corruption

Costa Rica does not, as a matter of government policy, encourage or facilitate illicit drug production or distribution, nor is it involved in laundering the proceeds of the sale of illicit drugs. There is no evidence that senior government officials are engaged in such activity. Despite good governance advances, however, government corruption remains a pervasive problem and corruption is a vulnerability that can be seized on for their own advantage by criminal actors. The 2022-2026 National Assembly includes 12 of 57 members with criminal corruption cases pending as of November 2023. As a signatory to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Anti-Bribery Convention, Costa Rica combats corruption on multiple fronts. In 2023, the National Public Ethics Prosecutor's office leveraged U.S. support to expand associations with civil society groups whose members are vulnerable to corrupt influences – including attorneys, engineers, accountants, architects, physicians, and the media. Newly developed ethics and transparency protocols were implemented widely in 2023.

Corruption within security forces also remains a challenge, though Costa Rica has taken steps to combat police corruption. The Judicial Investigative Police in August 2023 arrested three Coast Guard officers for alleged involvement in drug trafficking. The United States provides support to these investigations to identify, investigate, and prosecute corrupt actors.

The Judicial Investigative Police implemented an internal anti-corruption program to strengthen ethics controls in investigative, prosecutorial, and court systems. The Judicial Branch, with assistance from the United States, has launched three new anti-corruption initiatives to prevent, identify, and address corruption in the judiciary.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

Costa Rica is a strong U.S. partner. The United States supports capacity building for Costa Rica's security and judicial institutions through the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI). CARSI funding is aimed at fighting illicit drug production and trafficking, combating corruption and criminal activities, and investigating, dismantling, and prosecuting transnational criminal organizations (TCOs).

The United States supports police professionalization through a range of basic and specialized training, including at the National Police Academy. U.S.-supported curriculum and infrastructure development resulted in the completion of Costa Rica's first police aquatic training facility in 2023, a critical need given that many police officers have not been able to respond safely to incidents in the country's waterways and coasts. The United States also supported a new leadership course for 23 police supervisors, helping to train the next generation of security leaders.

The United States is supporting Costa Rican efforts to detect and seize synthetic drugs and to investigate and detain those involved in their distribution. In 2023, the United States provided synthetic narcotic testing devices and personal protective equipment for use by multiple police forces, ensuring the safe and efficient identification of synthetic threats.

The U.S.-Costa Rican citizen security program *Sembremos Seguridad* ("Let's Sow Security") serves as a cornerstone of bilateral cooperation to prevent drug-related crime, address the root causes of criminality and violence, and reduce the influence of TCOs. Costa Rica is a committed partner in this program, which is active in all 83 municipalities around the country. A new preventive policing model, expanded in 2023, combines data on crime trends and community risk factors, producing a roadmap that allows local police to identify crime hotspots and better respond to the needs of local communities.

Across the justice sector, the United States provides support on a broad range of topics, including countering organized crime, trafficking in drugs and persons, money laundering, cybercrime, anti-corruption, gender-based violence, wildlife and environmental crime, and alternative restorative justice programs.

D. Conclusion

In 2023, Costa Rica exhibited a strong commitment to combatting drug trafficking and TCOs, grappling with substantial hurdles stemming from budget constraints and pervasive resource limitations. Key priorities for Costa Rica should include prioritizing sustainable operation and maintenance of capital assets, including a critical increase in staffing across police forces, prosecutors, and the judiciary; further professionalizing police and judicial institutions, with an emphasis on anti-corruption measures; prioritizing an integrated, interagency approach to border and port security, including with technological investments; increasing Costa Rica's collaboration with regional partners to combat TCOs; and expanding citizen security best practices within Costa Rica and across the region.

Cuba

Cuba is not a major consumer, producer, or transshipment point for illicit drugs. Cuba's domestic production and consumption of illicit drugs are low due to strict policing and stiff prison sentences. Nationwide prevention and information campaigns also deter drug use and sale. Illicit drug production in Cuba is reportedly limited to minor cannabis production in the remote and mountainous regions of Guantanamo Province. The robust and aggressive Cuban security presence reduces domestic demand and severely limits the ability of transnational criminal organizations to establish a foothold. Cuba continues to concentrate efforts on patrolling its territorial seas and conducting searches at ports of entry. The Cuban government claims that drug trafficking incidents doubled in 2023; most incidents involved small seizures of marijuana encountered at Cuban airports. The Cuban Border Guard (CBG) maintains a force of approximately 6,000 troops to patrol over 3,500 miles of extensive coastline and cays. Due to Cuba's strict enforcement, drug trafficking entities typically bypass Cuba in favor of neighboring countries; however, Cuban officials have noted an increase in drug trafficking in and out of Cuba originating from neighboring territorial seas.

Cuba participates in the international community's effort to curb the flow of illicit drugs from producing to consuming countries. By volume, the majority of the seizures of illicit drugs come from jettisoned contraband washing onto Cuban shores. Cuba is a signatory to major international conventions pertaining to efforts to stem the flow of illicit drugs, and to 43 bilateral agreements to assist control efforts. In particular, the CBG has a long-standing relationship with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and frequently reports known or suspected drug trafficking efforts to the USCG. As an outcome of the Fifth Law Enforcement Dialogue the United States and Cuba held in January 2023, officials from several U.S. law enforcement agencies held a virtual information exchange with Cuban officials in July 2023 to bolster cooperation on counternarcotics.

Prescription drug abuse remains low compared to other countries. Despite severe pharmaceutical shortages in Cuba, steroids, psychoactive drugs, sedatives, and painkillers are available on the black market through diversion from the legitimate supply chain (including drugs intended for veterinary use) and illicit importation.

Dominican Republic

A. Introduction

The Dominican Republic (DR) is a major transit country for cocaine flowing from South America through the Caribbean. Trafficking networks rely on transshipped container hub-and-spoke operations in Dominican ports that offer predictable shipping routes to the United States and Europe. These networks also leverage the direct maritime route through the Caribbean Sea from the Venezuelan and Colombian coasts to under-patrolled areas off the southern coast of the DR using “go-fast” boats. The Dominican government cooperates closely with the United States to interdict drug shipments, extradite criminals, and combat drug traffickers and transnational criminal organizations (TCOs).

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

The United States continues to partner with Dominican law enforcement institutions to carry out shared policy objectives. While U.S. engagement stretches across all security-focused DR institutions, in 2023 there was a significant milestone in regional engagement when the DR Navy committed to signing a bilateral Maritime Operations Center (MOC) cooperation agreement with the Jamaican Defense Force. The agreement will expand their mutual ability to conduct air and maritime law enforcement operations against TCOs and demonstrates an increased level of maturity among regional partners.

2. Supply Reduction

During the first nine months of 2023, Dominican forces seized 19.5 metric tons (MT) of drugs, of which 72% was cocaine. Most seizures were in the Port of Caucedo on transshipped containers originating from South American ports, or via go-fast boats. The estimated street value of the seized drugs is \$570 million. The DR is on track to interdict over 20 MT of drugs for the third consecutive year.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

Based on the 2023 findings from a U.S.-funded assessment of the DR's National Drug Council (CND), the DR has a well-organized and capable public information and prevention system with the capacity to absorb continued U.S. assistance to better implement effective national policies to address prevention and treatment.

The CND demonstrates a strong desire to continue to promote health, human rights, and gender equity in their drug policies. The United States supports the CND with a grant to reduce drug use in vulnerable areas.

4. Corruption

The DR does not, as a matter of policy, encourage or facilitate illicit drug production or distribution, nor is it involved in laundering the proceeds of the sales of illicit drugs. There are significant reports, however, of continued corruption in security and regulatory agencies that leads to a more permissive environment for the smuggling of illicit goods including drugs. The Abinader administration has made impactful efforts to bolster the fight against corruption. In 2023, President Abinader established an anti-corruption mandate that resulted in the formation of a prosecutor led anti-Money Laundering Task Force (MLTF). Eight law enforcement and regulatory agencies contribute personnel and data to the U.S.-supported MLTF.

The Civil Asset Forfeiture Bill, passed by Congress in 2022, became effective this year. The bill is a powerful tool to fight corruption that allows the DR to confiscate assets acquired through, or used in, a range of illicit activities including corruption, narcotrafficking, and human trafficking. The complementary Administration of Seized and Forfeited Assets Bill, which includes significant transparency and accountability provisions, was enacted into law in October 2023. That law will create a new institution that will manage, maintain, and sell the forfeited assets, bringing revenue to the Dominican government.

The specialized corruption prosecution unit in the Attorney General's office continues to vigorously pursue public corruption cases including several high-level cases targeting government officials from both the former and current administrations.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U. S. Policy Initiatives

The Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) is the mechanism by which the United States implements assistance programs to improve Dominican security forces' capabilities. Through CBSI, the United States seeks to bolster institutional capacity of DR law enforcement agencies to disrupt illegal narcotic trafficking routes and dismantle TCOs. The United States interagency law enforcement development program supports the modernization and professionalization of the Dominican National Police (DNP), the National Directorate for Drug Control (DNCD), the Dominican Navy (Armada), and other specialized security forces. Among other activities, the program leverages U.S. investment in the Colombian National Police and Navy under the U.S. Colombia Action Plan (USCAP) to deliver 50 training activities for more than 1,400 security personnel per year.

The United States continues to lead efforts to modernize justice sector technology platforms to improve management and oversight and enhance operational capabilities. On this front, the United States seeks to leverage existing DR communications infrastructure to measurably improve the DNCD, Armada, and DR Air Force's capability to communicate when conducting hot pursuit maritime interdiction operations. The goal is to improve interoperability amongst the security forces when engaged in joint operations.

The United States' Counter Transnational Organized Crime (CTOC) program focuses on increasing the DR's capability to investigate, prosecute, and sentence complex cases against those involved in transnational organized criminal activity. The CTOC program provides specialized investigations training to the DNP, Attorney General's office, DNCD, and the Financial Intelligence Unit. Efforts under the CTOC program include enhancing the capabilities of DR's forensics labs as well as training and equipping DR agencies for improved cyber investigations capacity.

Synthetic drug use, production, and transshipment are currently not as significant as with other types of drugs trafficked through the DR. Nevertheless, DR counternarcotic leadership recognize the fast-growing global threat. In September 2023, the Dominican Republic joined the Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drugs launched by the United States in July 2023.

The Dominican Republic is one of the United States' most active extradition partners. In the absence of a bilateral mutual legal assistance treaty, requests for legal assistance take place under multilateral treaties and through law enforcement channels. The DR expeditiously processes extradition and mutual legal assistance requests.

The DR signed and ratified the Caribbean Regional Maritime Agreement (Treaty of San Jose) and has a maritime counter-drug agreement with the United States beginning in 1995. In 2023, the DR and Jamaica signed a cooperation agreement to combat regional maritime trafficking.

D. Conclusion

The Dominican Republic continues to show a commitment to strengthen its capacity to combat TCOs, and to emerge as a regional leader in targeting drug trafficking networks, pervasive corruption, illicit maritime drug/migrant smuggling, and confronting drug-fueled violence. The DR's interdiction efforts demonstrate a positive trend, helping stem the flow of drugs passing into and through Dominican territory. The reality on the ground shows that while the Dominican Republic still faces challenges in myriad of areas – including internal corruption, resource programming, established institutional doctrine, a mature level of interoperability, and operational trust amongst its forces – strong political will exists to build a coherent, multifaceted drug control strategy featuring increased cooperation among national and regional security forces. On maritime interdictions, DR forces now conduct 70 percent of all interdictions in the littoral coastal areas compared to 30 percent in years past, with the United States or other international forces conducting the others.

Dutch Caribbean

A. Introduction

Illicit drug trafficking in the six islands of the Dutch Caribbean varies in scope from island to island, but three remain key transshipment points. Although often erroneously considered a unified political entity, the Dutch Caribbean—formerly known as the Dutch Antilles—is a group of island countries and island exclave municipalities all within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Aruba, Curacao, and Sint Maarten are autonomous countries within the Kingdom of the Netherlands whose locally elected governments exercise near complete control over domestic affairs, whereas Bonaire, Sint Eustatius, and Saba are special municipalities of the Netherlands governed by locally elected councils presided by governors appointed by the Hague. Aruba and Curacao are located about 35 miles north of the Venezuelan coast and serve as northbound transshipment points for cocaine originating from Colombia and Venezuela. Sint Maarten is in the Eastern Caribbean and is a transshipment hub for cocaine, heroin, and marijuana transiting onward to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands as well as Europe. Cocaine is primarily transported via go-fast vessels, fishing boats, and inter-coastal freighters for transshipment to the U.S., other Caribbean islands, Africa, and Europe.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

Aruba, Curacao, and Sint Maarten exercise independent decision-making in several counterdrug areas and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, responsible for the islands' defense and foreign affairs, assists the governments in their efforts to combat drug trafficking through its support for the Recherche Samenwerkings Team (RST or "Special Police Task Force") and the Dutch Caribbean Coast Guard. Since 2016, the United States and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, including its constituent countries Aruba, Sint Maarten, and Curacao, have been party to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at enhancing existing cooperation and strengthening law enforcement and the criminal justice system in the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, making the fight against drug trafficking more effective.

Law enforcement cooperation, primarily between the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and regional law enforcement and national security counterparts, has strengthened ties with foreign governments and enhanced their ability to counter transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) and advance investigations with a U.S. domestic nexus.

Aruba

Aruba's police force, the Korps Politie Aruba (KPA), is a regional partner in addressing drug trafficking and combating international criminal organizations. The KPA collects and shares intelligence with regional law enforcement partners and continues to show a willingness to work together on a case-by-case basis. Traffickers primarily transport cocaine to Aruba on go-fast vessels, cargo containers, and commercial flights. KPA conducted several successful investigations in 2023, much of it in support of interdiction efforts with the Dutch Caribbean Coast Guard (DCCG). In the first nine months of 2023, KPA, with the assistance of other law enforcement agencies, seized over 4.4 metric tons (MT) of cocaine and approximately 1.2 MT of marijuana. Despite this success, KPA seized little U.S. currency in 2023. U.S. law enforcement continues to work with KPA and other law enforcement agencies on the island, including RST, to disrupt significant drug traffickers with the possibility of prosecutions in the United States. The DCCG in Aruba has formidable assets capable of maritime drug interdiction operations and the DEA works with its Aruba counterparts to maintain the integrity and effectiveness of these operations. The DEA is also working to support KPA's investigative efforts and to enhance cooperation with international investigations to identify a U.S. nexus. The Koninklijke Marechaussee (KMAR), a strong partner of U.S. law enforcement formed a new unit with permanent personnel stationed in Aruba. The presence of KMAR in Aruba will not only create more investigative leads, but also strengthen the relationship between KPA and U.S. law enforcement.

Curacao

Curacao's police force, the Korps Politie Curacao (KPC), works closely with the United States to diminish the flow of illicit drugs from Venezuela and Colombia to the Dutch Caribbean. In the first nine months of 2023, KPC and the DCCG jointly seized more than 2.2 MT of cocaine and over 6.5 MT of marijuana. KPC, RST, and KMAR collaborate well with U.S. law enforcement, particularly on private and commercial maritime and airborne

smuggling investigations. In 2023, Curacao and its U.S. law enforcement counterparts documented incidents where private aircraft staged and prepared for movements to Venezuela for future drug smuggling ventures. After traveling to Venezuela, they usually fly onward to Central America or other Caribbean sites including the U.S. Virgin Islands and the Bahamas. Good progress has been made on building better relationships with prosecutors in Curacao.

KPC continues to investigate drug trafficking organizations effectively and has increased efforts to collaboratively focus on top tier TCOs to increase regional and international prosecutorial results. The DEA is working with Curacao-based law enforcement counterparts to utilize the best means of safeguarding the integrity of operational intelligence and the deployment of valuable DCCG resources. The relationship between the DEA, KPC, RST, and KMAR continues to strengthen and evolve with new tools and capabilities to fight TCOs and disrupt their regional and international supply chains.

Sint Maarten

Sint Maarten/Saint Martin is a major transshipment point for cocaine trafficked from the Caribbean region to the United States, given its proximity to the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, and to Europe via transatlantic cargo vessels. Marijuana is also trafficked through the country and region with importation from the United States and Canada seen as an increasing trend. “Drug mules” or body carriers, also continue to travel through Sint Maarten and law enforcement has been effective with identifying such activities. This small two-nation island (Sint Maarten, “the Dutch side” with a population of approximately 44,000 and Saint Martin, “the French side” with a population of approximately 37,000) is a challenging place for law enforcement to combat drug trafficking. Colombian and Venezuelan drug trafficking organizations operating on the island employ Dominican boat captains to transport large, multi-ton quantities of cocaine monthly to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The United States and Korps Politie St. Maarten (KPSM), along with other St. Maarten law enforcement partners, are currently focusing on the transportation networks that serve as the supply chain for cocaine and human trafficking to the United States. French law enforcement partners based in Saint Martin have become significant allies in the fight against TCOs operating on the island. French collaboration with many U.S. law enforcement agencies is fast becoming a model for international partnerships within the

Eastern Caribbean. In July of 2023, U.S. law enforcement and their foreign law enforcement partners seized 1.9 MT of cocaine between two vessels, one originating from Saint Martin, with the destination believed to be Puerto Rico. KPSM and RST also observed targets believed to be associated with Canadian organized crime families and outlaw motorcycle gangs. These organizations appear to have an impact on government corruption, money laundering, and fraud via complex networks of business ventures and casino operations.

Originating in Sint Maarten, the Eastern Caribbean Law Enforcement Working Group is an unofficial group of senior investigators from Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and others in the island chain, meeting regularly throughout the year to share intelligence, success stories, and discuss obstacles to progress.

Bonaire, Sint Eustatius, and Saba

The National Office for the Caribbean in the Netherlands Ministry of Interior Affairs and Kingdom Relations oversees law enforcement, security, and other administrative functions on behalf of the Government of the Netherlands for Bonaire, Sint Eustatius, and Saba. None of these islands have high levels of detected drug trafficking. However, Bonaire continues to be a staging location for pilots and private planes planning illicit flights to South and Central America. Due to the successes the Dutch Navy and DCCG in seizing maritime drug loads in the vicinity of Bonaire, the Korps Politie Caribisch Nederland (KPCN) seized approximately 1.9 MT of cocaine. DEA continues to partner with both KPCN and the prosecutor's office to jointly exchange information and potential evidence to strengthen the local prosecution and potentially enhance international drug investigations.

2. Supply Reduction

Increased intelligence sharing and cooperation between Dutch Caribbean law enforcement organizations and the United States offers opportunities to improve drug supply reduction efforts. A layered law enforcement approach between the United States and the various Dutch Caribbean law enforcement organizations has resulted in more than 28 MT of drugs seized throughout the region. The success of drug seizures throughout the Dutch Caribbean benefits not only the United States, but European partners as well. Seizures stemming from the joint cooperation of the regional international law enforcement partners have an immediate impact on the

supply chain networks that feed into the United States and across the Atlantic Ocean. Through more routine case coordination meetings among U.S. agencies and regional law enforcement, particularly in the Eastern Caribbean, law enforcement has improved its ability to receive, evaluate and act on drug smuggling intelligence impacting the region. This open cooperation ultimately allows the United States to deploy enforcement resources more effectively throughout the region to prevent the flow of narcotics into the United States.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

Drug treatment and prevention are accomplished through a combination of privately and publicly funded foundations on each of the islands. Sint Maarten/Saint Marten has one drug treatment foundation on the French administered portion and one facility on the Dutch side. Curacao has a government-funded drug rehabilitation center known as Fundashon pa Maneho di Adikshon, known locally as “FMA.” FMA focuses on various forms of addiction including drugs, alcohol, and gambling; rehabilitation at FMA is at times court ordered.

4. Corruption

None of the Dutch Caribbean countries, as a matter of government policy, encourages or facilitates illegal activity associated with drug trafficking. Regional law enforcement partners actively investigate corruption throughout the region. U.S. law enforcement agencies work closely with multiple specialized investigative units to maintain the integrity of joint investigations. Wages, economic hardships, and small island politics can make counterparts more vulnerable to corruption. The DEA, as the lead point of contact in the Dutch Caribbean for other U.S. law enforcement agencies, continues to evaluate the most effective channels of communications to avoid potential corruption, while still building the necessary relationships for effective counterdrug operations on a larger international scale.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

The objectives of U.S. counternarcotics policy in the Dutch Caribbean are to promote cooperation between law enforcement and military partners and to reduce illicit drug

trafficking. The United States works with its island counterparts to advance joint investigations, both within the Dutch Caribbean and in the United States. The Kingdom of the Netherlands supports counterdrug efforts by supporting the U.S. Air Force Cooperative Security Location (CSL) in Curacao. U.S. military aircraft conduct detection and monitoring flights from the CSL in Curacao over the southern Caribbean Sea. In addition, the Dutch Navy regularly conducts counternarcotics operations in the region as the lead for Task Group 4.4 under the auspices of Joint Interagency Task Force South.

D. Conclusion

Thirteen years after the dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles, Curacao, Aruba, and Sint Maarten are still establishing counternarcotics organizational structures among their agencies with increasing success. U.S. law enforcement continues to take a multi-pronged approach to counter narcotics in the region, including further training of counterparts, enhancing intelligence for interdiction operations, and collaborating with top priority investigations. The United States encourages the Dutch Caribbean islands to embrace regional cooperation and intelligence sharing efforts.

Eastern Caribbean

A. Introduction

The seven independent countries of the Eastern Caribbean include key illicit drug trafficking transshipment points. The Eastern Caribbean consists of Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Local drug production in the Eastern Caribbean includes marijuana cultivation, largely for regional consumption, with varying amounts produced in each of the seven countries. The region is also a transshipment channel for cocaine to North America, Europe, the wider Caribbean basin, and Africa. The seven countries continue to report increases in seizures of high-grade marijuana originating from the United States, Canada, and South America. There is small-scale local demand for cocaine and synthetic drugs largely from North American and European tourists.

Challenges in the Eastern Caribbean to combating drug trafficking include extensive maritime borders, capacity constraints among regional police forces, and corruption. Countries lack sufficient maritime patrol and domain awareness resources to effectively cover their national waters. Traffickers mainly use vessels to transport illicit drugs, particularly “go-fast” and fishing boats that enable access to different territorial waters to store and transship drugs.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

All Eastern Caribbean police forces have dedicated counternarcotics units, which generally have solid working relationships with the United States. Police forces face institutional challenges due to resource constraints resulting from small regional economies, competing development demands, and a lack of institutionalized career progression. Corruption continues to hamper Eastern Caribbean law enforcement effectiveness.

All governments reported an increase in seizures of marijuana from the United States and Canada at their ports of entry. Traffickers import marijuana into the region mostly via commercial carriers and express mail delivery services. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is the largest marijuana producer in the Eastern Caribbean, with the majority produced for consumption off-island.

Several countries have decriminalized the possession and use of small amounts of marijuana, including Barbados, Dominica, and Saint Kitts and Nevis. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines allows cultivation of marijuana under the Medical Cannabis Industry Act of 2018. The Antigua and Barbuda Cannabis Board issues licenses to companies to grow medicinal marijuana.

All Eastern Caribbean countries have extradition and mutual legal assistance treaties in force with the United States. All have signed or ratified the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism. Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, and Grenada signed and/or ratified the Inter-American Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters, while Antigua and Barbuda and Saint Lucia have also ratified the Inter-American Convention on Extradition. All Eastern Caribbean countries have signed or ratified the Inter-American Convention against Corruption, while Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, and Saint Lucia have signed or ratified the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

2. Supply Reduction

During the first ten months of 2023, drug seizures in the seven Eastern Caribbean countries totaled 60 kilograms (kg) of cocaine and 4.4 metric tons (MT) of marijuana, according to data received from each country. The preponderance of cocaine seizures in the region occurred in Barbados and Saint Lucia, while almost three quarters of marijuana seized was in Barbados.

During the same period, Antigua and Barbuda reported 93 arrests, 68 prosecutions, and 30 convictions for drug-related offenses, including the May 2023 arrest of an individual for trafficking 5 kg of cocaine. Grenada reported 86 arrests and 29 convictions for drug-related offenses. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reported 51 arrests, 48 prosecutions, and 31 convictions for drug-related offenses. No data for the other countries was available for the first ten months of 2023.

The United States provided assistance to all seven countries, as well as key regional security organizations: the Regional Security System (RSS) and the Caribbean Community and Common Market's (CARICOM) Implementing Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS). Assistance included training, advisory programs, and equipment, which has allowed U.S. law enforcement agencies to strengthen operational relationships with certain counterparts.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

While reliable statistics on local consumption are not always available, evidence indicates that marijuana is by far the most used drug locally. All Eastern Caribbean countries have some form of drug demand reduction and youth education programs.

Barbados has programs through the National Council on Substance Abuse, including an Early Warning System to detect and test New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), although the incidence of NPS use in Barbados is negligible to date. The Royal Grenada Police Force has school programs to highlight substance abuse while Grenada's National Council on Drug Control has organized programs to support demand reduction.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines sponsors Police Youth Clubs and a "PAN against Crime" initiative, with steel pan musical instrument lessons provided to youth. Saint Kitts and Nevis has the Teen and Police Service program for at-risk teens. Saint Lucia's Substance Abuse Advisory Council develops policies and programs tailored to individuals and communities.

Some countries have drug rehabilitation clinics. Barbados has five drug rehabilitation clinics, while Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has offered drug counseling at The Marion House since 1989. Saint Lucia has a National Mental Wellness Centre which includes a drug rehabilitation and counseling service known as Turning Point.

4. Corruption

While Eastern Caribbean governments do not encourage or facilitate illegal activity associated with drug trafficking as a matter of law and policy, there is evidence to

suggest that some officials in the region may be involved in collusive activities with narcotics gangs.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

U.S. assistance to the Eastern Caribbean is delivered mainly via the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative. The United States has agreements with the RSS and CARICOM IMPACS, as well as bilateral agreements with each country on law enforcement cooperation. The main counternarcotics goals of the RSS agreement include supporting operations and training for the RSS Air Wing, Task Force, and Digital Forensics Lab.

D. Conclusion

The United States enjoys strong counternarcotics operational relationships with Eastern Caribbean countries. All countries should increase intra-regional cooperation, including via member state financial and personnel support to the RSS; develop standard operating procedures for investigative coordination between countries; and engage in exercises utilizing realistic counternarcotics interdiction scenarios to increase regional cooperation. Countries should continue to train and professionalize counternarcotics officers, including developing a defined career path for officers.

Ecuador

A. Introduction

Violent crime and insecurity fueled by drug trafficking gangs were the primary concerns of the Ecuadorian public as it voted in presidential elections in October 2023. The August 9 assassination in Quito of presidential candidate Fernando Villavicencio – an outspoken voice against drug trafficking, organized crime, and corruption – underscored the Ecuadorian government’s inability to adequately address the country’s record homicide rate. While Ecuador is not a major drug producing country, transnational and local criminal organizations exploit its porous land, sea, and air borders to ship illicit narcotics to the United States and other international destinations. The vast majority of drugs transiting Ecuador are shipments of cocaine from Colombia. Criminal groups also traffic cocaine precursor chemicals, weapons, and explosives across Ecuador’s border with Peru. Ecuadorian authorities have indicated the influence of Colombian, Mexican, Albanian, and other transnational criminal organizations facilitating the drug trade through Ecuador.

The Ecuadorian Observatory of Organized Crime reported in 2023 that drug trafficking is the primary form of organized crime in Ecuador and was responsible for a sharp increase in drug-related crimes such as weapons trafficking, money laundering, extortion, and corruption. While the Ecuadorian government has taken significant actions against drug trafficking, President Lasso publicly acknowledged in February 2023 that narcotraffickers and organized crime had infiltrated state institutions and politics. Rivalries between Ecuadorian gangs fighting to control trafficking routes have caused a spike in homicides and other violent crimes in recent years. In April 2023, President Lasso announced new measures to combat insecurity and drug trafficking, such as authorizing civilians to carry firearms for personal defense and declaring a state of emergency for 60 days in the coastal provinces of Guayas, Santa Elena, and the interior province of Los Rios, which allowed the military to carry out domestic security operations with the police, and expedited security-related public procurements. Also in April, the Public and State Security Council designated terrorism by organized crime groups as a threat to the state in an effort to increase military support to the police to confront these organizations.

Domestic drug consumption has also risen in recent years as local gangs increasingly push drugs into local communities, particularly targeting youth. Public treatment facilities are inadequately resourced to effectively counter Ecuador's increasing substance abuse. The United States maintains a strong security partnership with the Ecuadorian government.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

Ecuador's Ministry of Health oversees drug prevention and treatment programs and leads the Interinstitutional Committee for Drugs. The Ministry of Interior is responsible for countering the production, trafficking, sale, and use of illicit drugs; regulating the use of controlled substances; and destroying seized substances. In July 2023, the Ministry of Interior issued the 2023-2030 Strategy to Counter Transnational Organized Crime and the 2023-2030 Strategy Against International Trafficking of Scheduled Substances Subject to Government Control. The government's major challenges include securing financial resources and executing public procurement processes to equip the Ecuador National Police, the National Corrections Authority, and other key institutions.

The United States supports several units within the National Police, as well as the Ministry of Interior, Ecuadorian Coast Guard and Navy, National Court of Justice, Judicial Council, Comptroller General's Office, Financial Intelligence Unit, and Attorney General's Office. In 2023 U.S. and Ecuadorian maritime authorities conducted patrol flights to monitor and interdict maritime drug trafficking and engaged in operations to board vessels claiming Ecuadorian nationality and stateless vessels in international waters.

The United States and Ecuador have a bilateral extradition treaty that was signed in 1872 and a supplemental extradition treaty from 1939. Ecuador's constitution prohibits the extradition of Ecuadorian citizens. In February 2023, the Ecuadorian public voted against a referendum that would have allowed the extradition of Ecuadorian citizens accused of organized crime. The United States works with Ecuador's National Court of Justice to facilitate extradition requests of U.S. and third country nationals. The United States and Ecuador do not have a bilateral mutual

legal assistance treaty but cooperate under the Inter-American Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters, as well as relevant UN conventions.

2. Supply Reduction

As of October 6, 2023, the Ecuadorian government seized a total of 170.2 metric tons (MT) of illegal drugs, including 154.9 MT of cocaine, a one percent increase from that same period in 2022. Authorities seized 212 kilograms (kg) of heroin, a decrease of 113 kg from the same period in 2022. Seizures of marijuana totaled 15.01 MT as of October 1, an increase from 11.71 MT during that timeframe in 2022. The United States supported Ecuador's efforts to destroy stockpiled drugs, and in the first nine months of 2023 authorities destroyed over 180 MT of seized narcotics. Ecuador destroyed most of these seized narcotics through the use of encapsulation in cement, a faster, cheaper, and more environmentally friendly method than incineration.

The police seized 18,427 liters of liquid controlled precursor chemicals and 62.49 MT of solid controlled precursor chemicals as of October 5, 2023, compared with 16,150 liters and 65.67 MT in the first nine months of 2022. As of October 6, 2023, the police arrested 9,067 individuals for drug-related crimes, compared to 9,483 during the same period in 2022. However, conviction rates are low and the prison population has decreased during the same period. Maritime seizures of illicit drugs totaled 12.19 MT during the first nine months of 2023, compared to 3.60 MT during the same period in 2022. Through October 2023, Ecuadorian authorities detected two clandestine airstrips in Guayas province, compared to one such airfield authorities encountered in the first ten months of 2022.

Drug trafficking organizations extensively exploited ports in the coastal city of Guayaquil to ship cocaine concealed in cargo containers to the United States, Europe, and other destinations around the world. As of October 1, 2023, authorities had inspected 25.82 percent of containerized exports from Guayaquil ports and nearby Posorja. Up until that date, the National Police conducted 84,936 container inspections in Guayaquil's four port terminals, compared to 75,568 containers inspected in all of 2022. U.S. officials continued to work with Ecuadorian authorities to secure maritime cargo under the Container Security Initiative established in 2018.

In 2021, President Lasso issued a decree requiring Ecuador's ports to scan all outgoing containers. All outbound export containers are currently scanned at the port of Posorja and the three main ports in Guayaquil and one in Machala were scheduled to have scanners fully installed and operational by November 15, 2023.

In the first nine months of 2023, Ecuador eradicated 778 marijuana plants. The government did not detect any coca plantations as of October 2023. However, as of October 2023, the Ecuador National Police discovered and destroyed one cocaine processing lab in Sucumbíos province on Ecuador's northern border with Colombia.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

Ecuador has 62 publicly funded out-patient drug treatment facilities, 11 public in-patient facilities, and 45 licensed private in-patient facilities. In the first nine months of 2023, the Interinstitutional Drug Committee and the Ministry of Health carried out 3,932 drug prevention activities nationwide with 278,535 beneficiaries who participated in prevention activities in schools and universities; prevention activities at the workplace; cultural, recreational, and sports activities; and prevention activities involving families and communities. The Ministry of Health also carried out six wellness, mental health, and drug prevention digital media campaigns.

The Ecuadorian government is investing \$27,178,642 in the Project for the Development of the Strategy for the Comprehensive Approach to the Socio-Economic Phenomenon of Drugs and the Strengthening of Mental Health. As part of this project, the Ministry of Health is analyzing how to best implement mental health and drug demand reduction efforts at the community level. The government also hired 179 new professionals nationwide to support program development, drug consumption prevention planning, and other strategies and actions.

The United States supports the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America on drug demand reduction efforts in Ecuador, including through training women leaders to engage vulnerable youth on efforts against drugs. In 2023, the Organization of American States Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission and the Colombo Plan provided training to drug demand reduction professionals from the Ministry of Health, local municipalities, civil society, and other government institutions.

4. Corruption

In December 2022, President Lasso inaugurated Ecuador's first-ever Specialized Court for corruption and Organized Crime, consisting of 16 highly trained judges with national jurisdiction. The Ecuadorian government does not, as a matter of government policy, encourage or facilitate illicit drug production or distribution, nor is it involved in laundering the proceeds of the sale of illicit drugs. Government policy and laws forbid the illicit production or distribution of narcotics and other controlled substances, as well as the laundering of proceeds from illegal drug transactions. Nevertheless, drug-related corruption remains a problem within Ecuador's public security forces and judicial system. On July 26, 2023, the National Police and the Attorney General's Office detained and prosecuted two Ecuadorian Navy officials in Guayaquil for organized crime and drug trafficking.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

The United States enjoys a strong security partnership with the Ecuadorian government, including through providing training, equipment donations, and other capacity building assistance to help Ecuadorian institutions counter corruption, drug trafficking, and other transnational crimes. The United States government provided significant support to help Ecuador establish the Specialized Court for Corruption and Organized Crime. The court delivered its first convictions on July 31 and August 2, 2023, against 36 gang members guilty of weapons trafficking and organized crime. Such convictions would have been highly unlikely in a local level court given local judges' reluctance to convict violent criminals from their own jurisdictions and the historic data revealing a dearth of local court finding conspiracy convictions.

Throughout 2023, the United States provided extensive support for Ecuador's crime and violence prevention efforts in high crime locations and provided technical assistance to facilitate cooperation between municipalities, the police, and the central government on citizen security. The United States continued providing substantial support for Ecuador's antinarcotics efforts, including through equipment donations, technical assistance, and training to judges, prosecutors, the police, Coast Guard, the military, financial analysts, and justice sector officials. The United States also works with Ecuadorian security officials to increase maritime, port, border, and land interdiction

capacity, and to strengthen anti-corruption and anti-money laundering capabilities related to drug trafficking.

In 2022, President Lasso announced a plan to strengthen the National Police. As of October 2023, the Ecuadorian government had hired 8,521 new police officials and plans to add 2,300 more to the force in December 2023.

D. Conclusion

Ecuador's record homicide and violent crime levels, together with the exponential increase of other drug-fueled crimes such as extortion and kidnapping, propelled security issues to the top of public concerns in 2023. The Lasso administration's political will to strengthen police and military capabilities were positive but insufficient to reduce the impact of drug trafficking and organized crime on citizens security. The November presidential inauguration of Daniel Noboa, a 35-year-old centrist business leader and former legislator, is an important opportunity for the Ecuadorian government to strengthen the fight against drug trafficking and other transnational crimes, including by dedicating more resources and carrying out public procurements for crime prevention, anti-corruption, anti-money laundering initiatives, and border security. Noboa's new administration presents an opportunity for the Ecuadorian government to reinvigorate its security partnerships with the United States and other like-minded partners, including support for the Ecuadorian police, military, and justice sector institutions. The Noboa government and Ecuador's new National Assembly should also prioritize security-related legislative reforms, including to close legal loopholes favoring criminal actors, as well as to improve inter-institutional cooperation and information sharing.

El Salvador

A. Introduction

El Salvador is a transit country for illicit drugs and an important partner for interdicting illicit drugs destined for the United States. Bilateral cooperation is robust. Due to El Salvador's vigorous enforcement and interdiction efforts, drug trafficking organizations largely avoid passing through El Salvador by employing maritime routes past 500 miles offshore, well outside of El Salvador's economic exclusive zone. U.S. collaboration and assistance have supported El Salvador's successful interdictions.

El Salvador registered its first-ever fentanyl seizure in 2023, a quantity of 499 ampoules at a land border. U.S. and Salvadoran authorities are investigating the incident as a diversion of pharmaceutical-grade fentanyl from licit supply chains.

El Salvador's regulatory framework is based on the 2003 "Law Regulating Drug Related Activities" and the 2003 "Guidelines for Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropics, Precursors, Chemical Substances and Products." The regulation requires the National Medicine Directorate to publish an updated list of controlled substances within the first two months of every year. Pharmacies need special authorizations to import medications that are considered precursor chemicals or other scheduled medications. Substances on El Salvador's control lists must be prescribed by authorized medical professionals.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

The Anti-Narcotics Division (DAN) of the National Civil Police (PNC) is the primary entity responsible for combating drug-related crimes throughout El Salvador.

Following the first seizure of fentanyl in 2023, El Salvador immediately joined the Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats, which the United States launched in July 2023. The PNC reactivated a unit within the DAN that investigates diversions of synthetic drugs and chemical precursors. The unit has 16 officers performing both border interdictions and investigations. In addition, the government of El Salvador is in the early stages of establishing an interagency synthetics

taskforce to coordinate efforts between the PNC, Customs, and the national directorate responsible for scheduling and control of medications and precursor chemicals.

The PNC has a vetted, full time Sensitive Investigative Unit (SIU) responsible for conducting high-level and international drug investigations. The SIU is the primary contact for such cases with El Salvador's Attorney General's Office (FGR). SIU coordination within the region and with South American countries allows El Salvador to respond to drug trafficking alerts and to conduct investigations of larger transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) and operations. Under the bilateral extradition treaty with the United States, El Salvador extradites fugitives responsible for drug trafficking, and it also provides mutual legal assistance under applicable treaties.

El Salvador has a liaison navy officer assigned to the U.S. Joint Interagency Task Force - South (JIATF-S) that enables direct collaboration and communication with Salvadoran Navy leadership in support of maritime counternarcotics interdiction missions.

El Salvador's National Electronic Monitoring Center allows Salvadoran law enforcement authorities with judicial warrants to intercept electronic communications for violations of Salvadoran law including drug and human trafficking, extortion, gang activity, and homicide. The center also supports U.S. partners in a wide variety of investigations targeting TCOs. The center has increased communication between the PNC and FGR and streamlined the flow of actionable intercepted intelligence from the center to PNC surveillance teams.

2. Supply Reduction

From January through September of 2023 the DAN seized 3.1 metric tons (MT) of cocaine, 358.51 kilograms (kg) of marijuana, and 2.17 kg of crack cocaine. In the same period, Salvadoran authorities seized approximately \$1.2 million in bulk currency and arrested 942 individuals on drug-related crimes. These data represent a 63 percent reduction (by weight) in drug seizures over the previous year.

The Salvadoran Navy and the PNC's Maritime Tactical Operations Response Section (STORM) have been continuously increasing interdiction capabilities through site renovations, training, and fleet expansion.

The Salvadoran Navy Trident Unit seized 1.2 MT of cocaine at nearly 520 nautical miles off the coast of El Salvador in March 2023. Three Colombian nationals were arrested transporting the illegal narcotics.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

El Salvador has not kept reliable statistics for illegal narcotics consumption since 2012.

4. Corruption

The Government of El Salvador does not, as a matter of government policy, encourage or facilitate illicit drug production or distribution, nor is it involved in laundering the proceeds of the sale of illicit drugs. Still, corruption presents an ongoing challenge. The United States continues to support programs aimed at curbing corruption, including vetting and polygraph tests for El Salvador's security forces.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

The United States supports law enforcement cooperation, combating corruption, and strengthening the rule of law in El Salvador and the region. The United States provides capacity building for El Salvador's security and judicial institutions through the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI). CARSI funding is aimed at fighting illicit drug trafficking and combatting corruption and TCOs. CARSI funding complements other U.S. efforts, such as those focused on assisting vulnerable populations displaced by drug trafficking, violence, and crime.

U.S.-supported programs aim to expand Salvadoran capabilities to interdict, investigate, and prosecute illicit drug trafficking and other transnational crimes, implement prevention programs, and strengthen El Salvador's justice sector. In 2023, the United States donated software and training for a Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) to

help El Salvador standardize its DNA database for criminal offenders. The United States also continued its support of the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS), an automated fingerprint database, which allows U.S. law enforcement access to over 350,000 criminal fingerprints, including records for drug traffickers and members of TCOs. U.S. law enforcement requests information from El Salvador's AFIS database more than it does from any other foreign law enforcement system.

The Cooperative Security Location (CSL) Agreement, signed by the United States and El Salvador permits basing of U.S. counternarcotics detection and monitoring air assets in El Salvador. The arrangement supports El Salvador as a hub for regional drug interdiction efforts. It allows U.S. access to airports and other governmental facilities in connection with aerial detection, monitoring, and tracking of illicit drug trafficking operations. The CSL agreement will be up for renewal in 2025.

D. Conclusion

El Salvador maintained its capacity to fight transnational drug trafficking, disrupt trafficking patterns, and affect the calculus of traffickers in 2023, evidenced both by drug traffickers maintaining maritime routes far from El Salvador's coast and by successful land and maritime drug interdictions. El Salvador is enhancing its abilities to investigate, detect, and interdict synthetic drugs and precursor chemicals through the reinvigoration of a PNC unit and the creation of a task force staffed by PNC, customs, and the national directorate responsible for controlling medications and precursor chemicals.

El Salvador must strengthen its criminal justice institutions to complement regional interdiction efforts and effectively prosecute trafficking structures. Political will to confront corruption and support adequate budgets for the PNC and FGR remains a challenge.

Georgia

Georgia remains an attractive transit hub for significant quantities of opiates from Afghanistan, Iran, and other Eurasian countries utilizing shipping routes to Europe via the Black Sea. Since the start of Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine, transnational drug organizations are using, new drug trafficking routes across Georgia to transport opioids and synthetic drugs from Europe to countries such as Turkey, Armenia, and Azerbaijan.

The United States continues to strengthen counternarcotics capacity of Georgian law enforcement through a number of efforts. In 2023 this assistance included training on detecting and preventing smuggling of drugs across the border, passenger identification and screening, and money laundering identification. Other assistance included information sharing and strengthening international cooperation to combat drug trafficking and disrupt transnational criminal organizations. Georgia also joined the Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats that the United States launched in July 2023, including participation in several working groups.

In April 2023, the United States facilitated an operation between the Georgian Central Criminal Police Department (CCPD) and Belgian authorities that led to the seizure of 400 kilograms (kg) of heroin. In May 2023, the United States assisted CCPD in identifying a second commercial container, shipped from Iran to the Poti Port in Georgia, that resulted in a seizure of 80 kg of heroin.

Georgian legislative changes in 2023 included the adoption of a new Drug Strategy for 2023-30 with four pillars that include drug prevention, treatment/rehabilitation, harm reduction, and supply reduction. Georgia adopted an Action Plan for 2023-24, which included several new initiatives such as an Early Warning System to monitor emerging drug trends and the development of a Drug Related Death indicator. The Georgian Ministry of Justice also signed an agreement with the European Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction to exchange expertise on data-collection systems methodology, on New Psychoactive Substances, and to strengthen the capacities of the National Drug Observatory. Drug-related legislation remains largely dependent on punitive mechanisms and restricting the flow of drugs. Geographical access to Opioid Substitution Therapy

remains a recurring problem as a long-term medical program for opioid substitution in the penal system remains undeveloped.

Ghana

Public and political concern over drug consumption in Ghana is rising, providing U.S. counternarcotics agencies with many opportunities for cooperation on anti-drug measures. Ghana is a major transit point for moving heroin and cocaine to other countries in Africa, Europe, and the United States. It is also a source for ephedrine, pseudoephedrine, and tramadol that is diverted from the legitimate pharmaceutical market to the illicit drug market. It is a major marijuana cultivator but is not known to produce significant amounts of methamphetamine or other synthetic drugs. Ghana has both government and private treatment centers offering rehabilitation programs for drug users. Ghana's anti-drug messaging reached about 140,000 people in 2023, and the country trained 45 new substance abuse counselors.

With U.S. support, Ghana made major drug seizures in 2023 totaling 31 metric tons of marijuana, 51 kilograms (kg) of cocaine, 26 kg of ephedrine, 22 kg of heroin mixed with cocaine, 16 kg of amphetamine, 11 kg of heroin, 5.4 kg of tramadol, and 3 kg of methamphetamine. A U.S.-funded program to counter trafficking through the mail resulted in several seizures of cocaine, methamphetamine, and marijuana at Ghana's post offices. U.S. law enforcement believes Ghana's seaports are the main entry and exit points for the movement of illicit drugs; however, Ghana made no arrests or seizures at any port in the reporting period. Precursor chemicals entering Ghana are processed in neighboring countries such as Nigeria, according to U.S. law enforcement. Ghana is increasing attention on the issue by adding more known precursors to the controlled chemical list. The United States took part in two training workshops on proper documentation and reporting for businesses using precursor chemicals.

Ghana currently works well with the United States and other international partners in countering illicit drugs. The United States provides technical and logistical assistance to the Narcotics Control Commission as well as funding to increase capacity and cooperation among Ghana's other law enforcement agencies. The United States also funds a Sensitive Investigative Unit to collaborate on complex international conspiracy investigations. With U.S. support, law enforcement in Ghana is building capacity and strengthening interagency cooperation to move in a positive direction toward meeting anti-drug commitments.

An extradition treaty exists between the United States and Ghana. While no bilateral mutual legal assistance treaty exists between the two countries, Ghana is a party to multilateral law enforcement conventions that enable providing mutual legal assistance to the United States.

Guatemala

A. Introduction

Guatemala is primarily a transit country for illicit narcotics destined for U.S. markets. Given geographic proximity to the United States and a shared border with Mexico, Guatemala remains vulnerable to synthetic drug and precursor chemical diversion and transit. Porous borders, limited state presence, and widespread corruption limit the Government of Guatemala's ability to interdict narcotics. Narcotics seizures remain low as Guatemala has limited ability to detect and interdict illicit air, maritime, and land-based deliveries. Effective drug treatment and prevention programs are non-existent outside urban centers.

Guatemala is a willing partner in the fight against international narcotics trafficking and has taken steps to address the above challenges, including updating its list of controlled substances in January 2023 to include fentanyl-linked precursors. Guatemala is a member of the recently launched Global Coalition Against Synthetic Drug Threats. Also in 2023, Guatemala launched a pilot task force at Puerto Quetzal to identify containers transporting illicit substances and deployed its seventh and eighth highway checkpoints to combat drug, contraband, and bulk cash smuggling. Guatemala's Naval Special Forces (FEN) continue maritime interception operations, and Guatemala remains a regional leader in precursor chemical destruction. Reported aerial deliveries of cocaine continued to decline to record lows.

Despite these advances, endemic corruption continues to limit what Guatemala can do to curb narcotics flows and associated transnational organized crime. Guatemala is only beginning to create the legal framework to combat synthetic drugs, while weak inter-institutional collaboration inhibits a more coordinated approach to controlled chemical diversion. U.S. government-supported vetted units continue to play an outsized role in antinarcotics efforts.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies and Trends

1. Institutional Development

Guatemala's specialized antinarcotics police unit (SGAIA) is responsible for combatting drug related activity in country and at ports of entry, including eradication of illicit cultivations. The United States provides training and logistical support to SGAIA, including funding a K9 detection unit historically responsible for most drug seizures in country.

SGAIA directed additional resources to synthetic drugs after Guatemala updated its list of controlled substances in January 2023 to include fentanyl-linked precursors. SGAIA assigned twelve agents to a U.S. government-mentored precursor investigations group formed in 2023 and participates in interagency controlled substance investigations. While interagency Guatemalan government partners share information with the U.S. government-mentored group on chemical imports pursuant to a new precursor control regulation, that regulation requires presidential approval before it can be fully implemented. Multiple Guatemalan government partners have also been reluctant to commit full-time human resources to the investigations group.

Guatemala inspects containers that enter its Atlantic and Pacific ports but rarely identifies illicit narcotics or precursor chemicals. A U.S.-mentored task force started operations at Puerto Quetzal in March 2023 to improve container inspection efforts. Acting on a July 2023 alert from Guatemalan Customs (SAT), the task force seized 140 kilograms (kg) of cocaine aboard a vessel originating in Ecuador.

Trafficking patterns in Guatemala are predominately maritime deliveries from Colombia and Ecuador and land transports entering via the eastern border with El Salvador and Honduras. Guatemala has over 130 land points of entry with no Guatemalan border control presence. The United States supports Guatemala's efforts to expand its border presence and construct interagency checkpoints along major transportation routes in Guatemala to enhance border security. Guatemala activated the seventh and eighth of 12 planned checkpoints in 2023.

The FEN is responsible for maritime interdictions, with naval bases on the Pacific coast at Puerto Quetzal, the Atlantic coast at Puerto Barrios, and a riverine operation at a U.S.-supported forward operating base near the Mexican border. The FEN fleet includes four U.S.-donated Midnight Express interceptor boats that perform near shore maritime intelligence operations. The U.S. government also donated three riverine boats, bullet proof vests, and radio equipment to the FEN in 2023.

Guatemala is a regional leader in precursor chemical destruction. A U.S.-donated chemical incinerator has been instrumental to Guatemala's efforts to eliminate its 3,000 metric ton stockpile of chemical precursors (mostly methamphetamine) by the end of 2023.

2. Supply Reduction

SGAIA seized 3,604 kg of cocaine in the first nine months of the year, double the amount seized in 2022. SGAIA reported 59.5 hectares of coca cultivations destroyed in the same period. Cultivations are typically found in the Izabal, Alta Verapaz, and Peten departments of northern Guatemala. The number of cultivations destroyed in 2023 was double the amount destroyed in 2022. The FEN reported 2,594 hours navigated and 1,062 kg in maritime narcotics seizures in the first nine months of 2023. SAT reported 74 kg of narcotics seized at U.S.-supported interagency checkpoints in the same period.

Tighter profit margins for cocaine suppliers and a lack of available aircraft resulted in a continued decrease in air deliveries in 2023. Guatemalan authorities intercepted two of three reported air incursions in 2023 and seized 1,882 kg of drugs from these illicit aircraft. The Guatemalan military and SGAIA destroyed 12 illicit landing strips through September 2023, primarily in north and northwestern Guatemala.

U.S.-vetted units apprehended 15 individuals in the first nine months of 2023 with extradition orders for narcotrafficking. The Guatemalan government extradited several criminals to the United States during that same period.

3. Public Information, Prevention and Treatment

A 2022 United Nations (UN) Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) survey found that Guatemala has the second highest death rate from illicit drug use in North, Central and South America. Guatemala lacks a national treatment system for substance use disorders. The United States supported Guatemala in 2023 with the launch of local coalitions of rural health providers, community leaders and educators in Peten, Santa Catarina Pinula, and Puerto Barrios to address the lack of treatment and prevention resources in their communities.

4. Corruption

The Government of Guatemala does not, as a matter of government policy, encourage or facilitate illicit drug production or distribution, nor launder the proceeds of the sale of illicit drugs, but endemic corruption remains a significant problem. Ex-Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales expelled a UN-backed corruption commission in 2019 and Attorney General (AG) Maria Consuelo Porras dismissed the head of the Special Prosecutor's Office Against Impunity (FECI) in July 2021. The United States paused support to the Public Ministry (Guatemala's anticorruption ministry) and later designated Porras under Section 353 of the United States—Northern Triangle Enhanced Engagement Act, 22 U.S.C. sec. 2277(a) (requiring a report to Congress on persons who have engaged in corruption in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, resulting in their ineligibility for entry into the United States – “Section 353 List”). In July 2023, the United States added ten more individuals to the Section 353 List including former ministers, private sector representatives, and judges for undermining democratic institutions, engaging in corruption, and/or obstructing investigations into acts of corruption.

In August 2023, Bernardo Arévalo won the Guatemalan presidential election with 58 percent of the vote while running on an anti-corruption platform.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

The United States and Guatemala have a bilateral agreement to jointly suppress illicit narcotics trafficking by sea and air which includes provisions for ship boarding, ship riders, entry to investigate, overflight of territorial seas, order to land, and interdiction

support. Guatemala has an extradition treaty with the United States, and U.S. law enforcement agencies support several vetted units in country. The United States also supports sustainable law enforcement cooperation, citizen security initiatives, and efforts to strengthen the rule of law in Guatemala.

D. Conclusion

Endemic corruption, weak institutions and an antagonistic legislature could potentially hinder efforts by the new government to institute improvements tackling transnational crime in Guatemala. Poor inter-institutional cooperation has historically inhibited greater success on air and maritime interdictions and has frustrated a coordinated response to precursor chemical diversion and synthetic drugs. Nevertheless, Guatemala has demonstrated the will to collaborate with U.S. law enforcement on narcotics investigations, arrests, and extraditions, particularly via U.S.-supported vetted units.

Guyana

A. Introduction

Guyana's location along the northern coast of South America makes it an attractive transit point for drug traffickers. Traffickers leverage the country's extensive river networks, dense rainforests, and proximity to major drug-producing countries like Colombia to smuggle cocaine to international markets, including the United States, Europe, and West Africa. Cocaine is smuggled to Guyana through its largely unregulated land and river networks and increasingly along the country's many illegal airstrips. Cocaine is also disguised in legitimate cargo and trafficked using commercial and private aircraft, maritime vessels, human couriers, and postal systems. Now the most widely used and confiscated illicit drug in Guyana, marijuana cultivation, use, and trafficking has been steadily increasing. Guyana's growing domestic drug consumption problem requires continued attention and resources.

As a result of its increased oil production, Guyana had the highest GDP growth in the world for 2022, at 62.3 percent. However, the level of crime in Guyana remains a concern for the country's continued investment climate. While the Government of Guyana has taken measures to combat drug trafficking with improved legislation and deeper cooperation with international agencies, drug traffickers continue to advance their illegal activities with increased sophistication. Guyana should leverage its recent membership in the Regional Security System to enhance its counternarcotics capacity and deepen its integration into regional security.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

The Government of Guyana has legislation in place that could enable a more effective response to the threat of drug trafficking. These include a National Drug Strategy Master Plan 2022-2026 (the Plan), the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Act (amended in 2023), and the Criminal Law Procedure Act (revised in 1998). These were designed to enhance the investigative capabilities of law enforcement authorities and prosecutors in obtaining convictions

of drug traffickers. Impediments to effectively implementing the Plan include corruption, ineffectual legislation, and limited manpower, financial, and equipment resources.

Guyana is party to the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption. In 2008, Guyana acceded to the Inter-American Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters (the Convention) and has filed information requests under the Convention, to which the United States is also a party. The 1931 Extradition Treaty between the United States and the United Kingdom is applicable to the United States and Guyana. Guyana has bilateral counternarcotics agreements with its neighbors and the United Kingdom. Guyana is also a member of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission. The Governments of Guyana and the United States signed a Bilateral Ship Rider Agreement in 2020.

2. Supply Reduction

Marijuana is trafficked from Guyana to neighboring nations via maritime vessels and then moved to other territories. Eradication operations at marijuana farms across the country are common, and in the first nine months of 2023, one metric ton of cannabis was seized via interdiction efforts by drug enforcement agencies. This represents a 62 percent decrease for the same period in 2022. Cocaine trafficking occurs via aviation and maritime channels. In early October, the Spanish Navy seized a Guyana registered vessel carrying a metric ton of cocaine off the West African coast. As of late October 2023, the investigation was ongoing. The government maintained a drug enforcement presence at international airports, post offices, and some seaports and land and border entry points. Cocaine interdiction efforts decreased by 38 percent with 62 kilograms of cocaine seized from January to September 2023.

Drug enforcement agencies have reported synthetic drugs being trafficked into Guyana from Suriname and Europe. One case involving a synthetic drug seizure was made in 2023. A total of 192 grams of synthetic drugs were seized in the first nine months of 2023. Drug enforcement agencies reported 70 prosecutions for illicit drug trafficking as of October 2023, with 41 resulting in convictions.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

Marijuana remains the most widely used illicit drug in Guyana, followed by cocaine. Marijuana's prevalence can be attributed to local cultivation and ease of access. The Plan addresses demand reduction in detail. The National Drug Demand Unit, with support from other agencies, has oversight over implementing the strategy. There are 10 treatment and rehabilitation centers countrywide, increased from four in 2022. Non-governmental organizations also offer rehabilitation services, with the government providing financial assistance. The Ministry of Human Services and Social Security, the Ministry of Health, and drug enforcement agencies conduct anti-drug awareness training in primary and secondary schools countrywide. Approximately 12 drug treatment courts also provide support to the drug reduction strategy.

4. Corruption

As a matter of policy, the Government of Guyana does not encourage or facilitate the illicit production or distribution of narcotics, psychotropic drugs, or other controlled substances, or the laundering of proceeds from illegal drug transactions. The government has made efforts to address corruption through its legislation and some institutional advancements. The Integrity Commission and the State Assets Recovery Agency were established to combat corruption. An amendment to the Anti-Money Laundering law that allows the government to seize the assets of those involved in illegal activity was finalized in August 2023. However, corruption exists in almost all sectors because of weak law enforcement institutions, insufficient resources, an ineffective judicial system, and poor compensation for civil service employees.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

The United States supports a wide range of efforts to combat illicit narcotics trafficking and address crime and violence affecting Guyanese citizens, primarily through the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) which supports efforts to build law enforcement capacity, enhance air and maritime borders, strengthen criminal justice institutions, and combat money laundering. The Government of Guyana has an interest

in deepening cooperation with the United States on drug control, extradition, mutual legal assistance, and other transnational criminal issues. U.S. and Guyanese law enforcement have successfully collaborated on criminal investigation matters.

Guyanese military and law enforcement maintain cooperative relationships with the United States. CBSI-funded programs support Guyana's maritime operations by providing interdiction assets, command and control systems, and logistical support and training. By strengthening Guyana's counternarcotics capabilities, the United States seeks to enhance Guyana's interagency coordination and assist Guyana in obtaining better information on drug trafficking trends and routes. The United States and Guyana maintain a bilateral agreement to jointly suppress illicit trafficking by sea and air.

D. Conclusion

The United States enjoys positive cooperation with Guyana in advancing mutual interests against the threat of transnational organized crime and drug trafficking. Bilateral relations and deeper security cooperation have improved through the CBSI. The United States encourages the government to make tangible progress on investigations, prosecutions, security sector capacity building, engagement with at-risk communities, and enforcement of laws against drug trafficking. Counternarcotics activities should focus on improving port security and enhancing container inspections through risk-based targeting, monitoring, and dismantling of unlicensed airstrips, and building skills in complex transnational investigations. Guyana should seek to further enhance its anti-corruption initiatives, police professionalization efforts, and interagency coordination to effectively address narcotics trafficking.

Haiti

A. Introduction

Haiti is a transit point for cocaine from South America and marijuana from Jamaica en route to the United States, with limited local cannabis cultivation and no reports of fentanyl trafficking. BLTS, which is the French acronym for the counternarcotics unit of the Haitian National Police (HNP), continues to actively investigate and interdict drug trafficking along the southern coast, shifting some illicit activities to northern Haiti. The country has long been plagued by political instability and gang violence, which has worsened since the assassination of President Jovenel Moise in July 2021. Gangs now control large swaths of Port-au-Prince and parts of neighboring departments. Gangs regularly engage in violence against civilians, including kidnappings, extortion, and rape. The violence and degradation of government services have exacerbated economic woes in what was already one of the poorest countries in the world.

Further, the country is facing high inflation, food insecurity, and unemployment, and millions of Haitians need humanitarian assistance, including food, water, shelter, and medical care. Since an outbreak began in October 2022, there have been over 64,000 suspected cases of cholera in the country. Haiti has also experienced a distressing surge in kidnappings, primarily in Port-au-Prince. Violent gangs continue to extend their territorial influence beyond inner-city slums, controlling key access points to major highways leading south and obstructing fuel distribution routes. This has further worsened an already ailing economy, with almost 60 percent of the population living in poverty. The simultaneous crises have overwhelmed the HNP, rendering it incapable of restoring security or adequately addressing drug trafficking. The HNP remains severely understaffed, under-resourced, overextended, and possibly influenced by gangs. The HNP struggles to control Haiti's porous borders, as most of the coastline and land border crossings with the Dominican Republic remain largely unstaffed and uncontrolled.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

Despite Haiti's challenges, BLTS is committed to curbing the flow of illicit drugs. A cornerstone of its mission is establishing command bases and a strong presence in remote areas where drug trafficking occurs. BLTS targets efforts to geographic hotspots, including Jacmel and Anse-a-Pitres in the Southeast region and Terrier Rouge, Ouanaminth, Belladere, and Malpasse in the north, many of which serve as vital border crossings with the Dominican Republic. In an effort to increase efforts in the Southeast, BLTS worked to refurbish the Jacmel Base in partnership with the International Organization for Migration and, with U.S. support, trained 40 border police (POLIFRONT) and ten BLTS personnel. Recognizing staffing limitations, and despite security challenges, in August 2023 the BLTS also welcomed 47 newly trained police officers who completed the BLTS Basic Counternarcotic Training to support efforts in hotspot areas.

BLTS faced obstacles stemming from insufficient funding, limited support from the Haitian government, HNP leadership, and the Haitian justice system. These constraints placed considerable strain on BLTS's ability to sustain its confidential informant program and effectively gather intelligence. Assistance from U.S. law enforcement advisors was pivotal in addressing these shortcomings. Further, BLTS lacked sufficient capacity to maintain and service U.S.-donated vehicles, equipment, machinery, and boats and to undertake operations.

2. Supply Reduction

BLTS records from January 31 to August 31, 2023 reflect seizures of 130.7 kilograms (kg) of marijuana, 6.5 grams of cocaine, five weapons, and 59 arrests. BLTS played a pivotal role in the apprehension of Haiti's notorious politically connected drug dealer, Eliobert Jasme, known as "Eddy 1," and the arrest of two corrupt Haitian police officers assisting his drug trafficking organization, through a joint operation with the United States. Information facilitated by BLTS also led to the arrest of a Colombian national and Dominican national source of cocaine.

BLTS efforts also resulted in the disruption of a Nigerian cocaine trafficking network operating from Port-au-Prince International Airport to Europe and the United States, culminating in the extradition of the network's leader to the United States. BLTS took proactive measures to eradicate marijuana cultivation in Quartier Morin/Limonade, North Haiti, as part of its comprehensive counternarcotics initiatives. Collaborative operations with Haitian Customs agents at seaports led to seizures of assault rifles, guns, and ammunition. In October 2023 BLTS executed an operation near Les Cayes, seizing an airplane used to smuggle cocaine.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

Illicit drug use is uncommon in Haiti due to the population's minimal discretionary income. The Government of Haiti runs small-scale public awareness and demand reduction programs funded through the counternarcotics policy commission (CONALD), but there is no available data on the impact of these programs.

4. Corruption

The Haitian government does not, as a matter of official policy, promote or facilitate drug trafficking or money laundering. However, its ability to combat corruption, particularly related to drug trafficking organizations, faces significant challenges. The primary challenge is Haiti's limited legal framework. Corruption was not designated as a criminal offense until 2014 when a law was enacted to formally criminalize public corruption and establish penalties for activities such as bribery and unlawful procurement. The implementation of this law remains problematic, and there is a need for ongoing efforts to educate judges about its provisions. Additionally, Haiti's asset seizure laws have enabled the Central Unit of Financial Investigations and the HNP's Financial and Economic Affairs Bureau to confiscate assets.

Another significant constraint is Haiti's persistently fragile judicial system, which is burdened by archaic criminal codes, nontransparent court proceedings, a lack of judicial oversight, and pervasive judicial corruption and inefficiency. From 2004 to November 2nd, 2023, the Haitian "Unite de Lutte Contre la Corruption" (ULCC) has referred 76 corruption cases to the judiciary, with 31 cases in the last three years

involving high-profile figures like Youri Latortue, Roni Celestin, and Joseph Lambert, of which only three are under active investigation. Additionally, the Bureau of Financial and Economic Affairs has forwarded 53 cases to the judiciary in 2023 alone, yet convictions remain notably low, with only one corruption-related conviction and five for drug trafficking recorded, reflecting the limited success in combatting corruption since the ULCC's formation in 2005. However, Joseph Félix Badio, a former Haitian Justice Ministry official and prime suspect in the 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse, was arrested on October 19, 2023, outside a local supermarket in Petion Ville.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

Haiti maintains several international drug control agreements and cooperates regularly with the United States on drug-related cases. The 1997 bilateral letter of agreement on Cooperation to Suppress Illicit Maritime Drug Traffic allows U.S. law enforcement agencies to enter Haitian territorial waters and airspace in pursuit of suspect vessels or aircraft; to board and search suspect vessels; to patrol Haitian airspace; and to carry members of the Haitian Coast Guard (HCG) as passengers on U.S. vessels. Although there is no mutual legal assistance treaty between Haiti and the United States, the Haitian government has cooperated within the limits of Haitian law. Haiti and the United States are parties to a bilateral extradition treaty, though the Government of Haiti has opted to surrender individuals under indictment in the United States to U.S. law enforcement agencies.

U.S. drug control initiatives in Haiti focus on improving the capacity of the BLTS, POLIFRONT, and the HCG to detect, investigate, and deter drug trafficking organizations. Agreements between the United States and Haiti in 2004 and 2013 governs these activities. Core goals are to increase drug interdiction capabilities and prosecutions against trafficking organizations.

D. Conclusion

While the HNP maintains its commitment to combat illicit drug trafficking, persistent challenges, such as ongoing gang violence, kidnappings, and political instability, place immense strain on the HNP's limited resources, diverting their efforts from providing

comprehensive security for the broader Haitian population. Continuous support from the United States has bolstered the institutional development of the HNP and enhanced Haiti's capacity to counter drug trafficking. The marked dysfunction of the Haitian judicial system hampers domestic prosecution of offenses and undermines law enforcement's ability to deter drug trafficking organizations. A dearth of capacity within the prosecution and court systems, coupled with corruption issues, exacerbates the situation. Furthermore, drug seizures continue to remain at low levels, and the HNP's capability to patrol both Haiti's maritime and terrestrial borders remains inadequate.

Honduras

A. Introduction

Honduras remains a major transit country for cocaine destined for the United States. Counterdrug operations continue to yield limited results and marginally impact the increasing narcotics activity within eastern Honduras' ungoverned spaces. During the first nine months of 2023, the Government of Honduras reported seizing a total of 486 kilograms (kg) of cocaine, down from 4.9 metric tons (MT) in 2022. Government sources attribute this reduction to a renewed focus on eradication. Reports indicate rising street-level use of synthetic drugs. Drug and cocaine precursor chemical storage and destruction remain immense challenges.

Interagency communication problems and lack of funding continue to plague counterdrug efforts. Increased political instability and uncertainty have negatively affected the Honduran Congress' ability to pass legislation and has stalled the election of a permanent new Attorney General and Deputy. This uncertainty creates a more conducive operating environment for transnational criminal organizations and narcotraffickers to operate with impunity. In December 2022, the Castro administration instituted a targeted State of Exception to combat extortion and has continuously extended and broadened it with no indication when it would lift it. Scarce police and military resources and personnel challenges have diverted focus away from counterdrug operations to those supporting the State of Exception.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

The Castro administration claims counternarcotics as one of its top priorities. However, counternarcotics operations minimally disrupt growing narcotrafficker presence, partially due to a lack of interagency coordination and geographic and personnel challenges, particularly in the Colon and Gracias a Dios Departments where law enforcement presence is extremely limited. Government of Honduras sources estimate between 80 and 120 MT of cocaine arrive annually, but external

sources indicate the real quantity of drugs trafficked through the lawless eastern part of the country is much higher.

The Government of Honduras has made some progress on its strategy and institutional development. The Vice Minister of Security leads 25 institutions in developing a National Strategy Against Organized Crime, with support of the United Nations Office for Drug and Crime (UNODC). In July 2023, the Government of Honduras launched a National Coalition Against Illegal Use of Precursors and Chemical Substances. With 34 members from across the interagency and private sector, the Coalition focuses on the administration, investigation, and regulation of precursors and chemical substances.

U.S. agencies have made substantive contributions to the Honduran Joint Interagency Operations Center (CCOI), created in 2020 as a fusion center to coordinate interagency response to illicit land and maritime trafficking. In May, the Department of State authorized lifting aerial interdiction-related restrictions on U.S. assistance to Honduras. However, scarce resources, lack of political will, and ambiguous roles and responsibilities have prevented full utilization of the CCOI.

Honduras is party to the Organization of American States' Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission and the Caribbean Regional Agreement on Maritime Counternarcotics and ratified the Inter-American Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters. The United States and Honduras are parties to a bilateral extradition treaty and Honduras cooperates on extraditions. The United States maintains a bilateral agreement with Honduras to suppress illicit traffic of drugs by sea, including by ship boarding, ship riders, pursuit, entry to investigate, and overflight.

2. Supply Reduction

Honduran authorities eradicated approximately 194 hectares of coca fields (over 5.5 million coca bushes) and destroyed 14 rudimentary drug laboratories during the first nine months of 2023, compared to 36 hectares (1.5 million bushes) and 15 laboratories during calendar year 2022. In the first nine months of 2023, the U.S.-supported Sensitive Investigations Unit (SIU) seized 196 kg of cocaine and 4 kg of coca base paste and the special tactical group within the Honduran Frontier Police

supported the seizure of 70 kg of cocaine. The Honduran Navy Special Forces (FEN) seized over 188 kg of cocaine and 66 kgs of hashish, participated in operations resulting in the destruction of 23,000 coca bushes, and seized nine vessels suspected of drug smuggling. Strong and continued U.S. collaboration with and support for the Honduran National Police's Anti-Drug (DNPA) unit, Frontier Police, and Special Forces Directorates has been instrumental in these seizures.

SIU supported investigations for 33 people convicted for aggravated drug trafficking charges. DNPA reported 3,369 drug-related arrests on a national level, noting the number of related convictions is unknown.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

There is limited public information on drug use. The Honduran Drug Observatory has never undertaken a general population survey regarding illegal drug use, and reports of street drug sales, or "microtrafficking" are mostly conjecture, shared by word of mouth. However, in September, DNPA created a separate unit solely focusing on microtrafficking, suggesting an expansion in focus and priority to address the growth of drug-related violence in the community. Both anecdotally, and according to lab reports, Hondurans mostly consume marijuana and cocaine base, or "crack." Gangs remain a significant problem and contribute to Honduran youth involvement in the drug trade, leading to violence and instability. The U.S.-supported Gang Resistance Education and Training program reached 39,000 students in 2023 with information about the dangers of drugs.

4. Corruption

Honduras does not, as a matter of official government policy, encourage or facilitate illicit drug production or distribution. However, corruption remains widespread in the private and public sectors and impedes interdiction and prosecution efforts. Continued impunity in the judicial branch is of particular concern since it reduces risks to narcotraffickers. Of note, in March, the Castro administration unexpectedly replaced the national jurisdiction judge who had handled most of the organized crime cases focusing on drug trafficking organizations.

Negotiations between Honduras and the United Nations on the establishment of an International Commission Against Impunity and Corruption in Honduras are ongoing. Under a memorandum of understanding the two parties signed in December 2022, a technical team of UN anticorruption experts made several visits in 2023 as they prepare a report to the UN Secretary General. While the Castro administration has made repeated claims to establishing the CICIH, the UN has clarified it is still in the process of determining how the commission would operate.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

The United States supports capacity building for Honduras' security and judicial institutions through the Central America Regional Security Initiative, which aims to counter illicit drug production and trafficking and combat corruption and transnational criminal organizations, among the key drivers of irregular migration.

A top regional priority is building capacity to safely store and dispose of an increasing stockpile of seized drugs and precursor chemicals in Honduras. UNODC will present its national assessment in November, which will drive next steps in the counterdrug strategy. Honduran authorities have started to coordinate with Guatemala to negotiate transport to and use of Guatemala's incinerator to destroy pre-cursor chemicals.

D. Conclusion

Honduras authorities need to close an increasing security gap in lawless areas of the country that drug traffickers and transnational criminals continue to exploit. Future action should focus on completing the development of the Honduran organized crime strategy, improving interagency coordination in support of counter drug operations, clarifying CCOI role and mission, internalizing UNODC's recommendations on destroying seized drugs and chemicals, enhancing investigative capabilities and information sharing, strengthening ground, air, and maritime interdiction capabilities, and taking significant steps to counter corruption.

India

A. Introduction

The promulgation and enforcement of laws and regulations governing licit and illicit drugs in India face significant bureaucratic, capacity, and resource challenges. These challenges are compounded by India's large pharmaceutical and chemical industries and geographically remote arable regions. Despite these obstacles, the Indian government acknowledges domestic problems related to illicit drug use and supports partnering with the United States to reduce production, demand, and cross-border trafficking of illicit drugs.

Drug use in India is growing, facilitated by cheap and widely available illicit drugs. Commonly used drugs are sourced from domestic cultivation and production and from neighboring states; India has almost 9,500 miles of land borders to surveil, a coastline measuring nearly 4,700 miles, and shares borders with two major production and transit hubs, Pakistan, and Burma. According to India's Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilizers, India is the world's third largest producer of pharmaceuticals, manufacturing over 60,000 generic drugs and precursor chemicals. India also plays a significant role in production of controlled substance active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) and finished products. Diversion of legitimate products through illicit channels, including online distributors, takes place within and outside of India.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

The Drugs, Medical Devices, and Cosmetics Bill 2023, intended to replace the Drugs and Cosmetic Act of 1940 and impose new regulations on drug manufacturing and e-pharmacies, remains pending. The bill faces objections from India's \$42 billion pharmaceutical industry. Regulatory processes are similarly hampered by bureaucratic hurdles. In August, the government began requiring packaging on commonly used medications to carry a QR code to ensure authenticity and prevent sales of counterfeit and sub-standard medicines.

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) fills the principal law enforcement role at the national level in India's efforts to combat illegal drugs. The Central Bureau of Narcotics (CBN) oversees the legal cultivation of poppies and opium used in the lawful production of narcotic medicines. Other relevant Indian law enforcement agencies include the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, the Enforcement Directorate and, in cases of narco-terrorism, the National Investigation Agency.

India does not effectively regulate online drug sales. U.S.-based customers can access synthetic opioids such as tramadol, tapentadol, fentanyl, and fentanyl analogues through online portals based in India. India is the world's largest manufacturer of tramadol (first regulated in India in 2018) and tapentadol (still unregulated). India is also a source country for the fentanyl adulterant xylazine. The distribution of illicit pharmaceuticals originating from India is facilitated by shell companies and re-shippers that misuse international mail systems to send thousands of packages each day into countries including the United States.

With a growing backlog of over 42 million cases, India's court systems are often unable to conduct timely prosecutions. Domestic legislation that has not kept pace with current trafficking practices also complicates drug conspiracy investigations and international law enforcement cooperation. India has bilateral agreements with 45 countries on cooperation to reduce demand and illicit trafficking. India is a signatory to extradition treaties with at least 50 countries, including the United States. Additionally, the United States and India are parties to a bilateral mutual legal assistance treaty, under which there is regular cooperation. The NCB regularly shares law enforcement information and coordinates with a variety of regional organizations, including the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Drug Offences Monitoring Desk; the Colombo Plan and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Co-Operation.

2. Supply Reduction

During the period June 2022-May 2023, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) data show seizures of 4 metric tons (MT) of heroin; 4.7 MT of opium; 664 MT of marijuana; 1.7 MT of methamphetamine precursors, ephedrine, and pseudoephedrine; 235

kilograms (kgs) of cocaine; and over 17.6 million psychotropic tablets. MHA reported the eradication of 26,344 acres of illicit cannabis production and 13,580 acres of illicit poppy in 2022 (most recent data). In May 2023, the Indian Navy and NCB seized a shipment of 2.5 MT of methamphetamine off the coast of Kerala. Indian officials report almost daily airport interdictions of couriers smuggling heroin, cocaine, and MDMA into India. Drug-carrying drones from Pakistan are regularly intercepted attempting to smuggle drugs into India including in the state of Punjab and the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. In July 2023, U.S. authorities seized six million tramadol pills at JFK International Airport in New York shipped from India.

A September 2023 article in *The New York Times* described India as the manufacturer of 62 percent of global pharmaceutical APIs. Criminal organizations have been able to exploit the high level of technical expertise in India and access to chemicals and facilities to manufacture and traffic synthetic drugs and precursor chemicals. The size and domestic importance of the pharmaceutical and chemical industries in India create significant challenges in regulating chemical and pharmaceutical production, trade, and sales. A lack of integrated networks and case management software present additional enforcement challenges.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

India's Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJE) estimates that 23 million people aged 10 to 75 use opioids, and that eight million Indians suffer from opioid use disorders, of whom 70 percent receive no treatment. An Implementation Framework created by MSJE facilitates awareness, education, and community-based services. The Indian government approach to drug dependency reduction (DDR) is far-reaching using medical and psychological therapies as well as yoga, ayurvedic, and other alternative methods.

4. Corruption

India does not, as a matter of government policy, encourage or facilitate illicit drug production or distribution, nor is there evidence that it is involved in laundering the proceeds of the sale of illicit drugs. Instances of government officials involved with

narcotics represent isolated cases of corruption that do not reflect Indian government policy or political attitudes.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

The United States and India continue to expand counternarcotics efforts. In July, Washington hosted the fourth annual meeting of the U.S.-India Counternarcotics Working Group (CNWG). The meeting focused on law enforcement cooperation, regulatory and policy matters, public health, and supporting India's regional counternarcotics leadership. Both governments seek to formulate a bilateral Drug Policy Framework for the 21st Century, an outgrowth of commitments made during the state visit of PM Modi to Washington in June. U.S. and Indian law enforcement continue operations to interdict transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) conducting business between the United States and India. Cooperation is growing on analysis of the links between narcotics, terrorism, and the role of cryptocurrencies.

D. Conclusion

Indian markets present significant challenges to U.S. counternarcotics efforts due to the large licit pharmaceutical and chemical industries, outdated regulatory and policy frameworks, porous borders, and inadequate government law enforcement resources. India will continue to grow as a source, transit hub, and consumer of narcotics—particularly for synthetic opioids and New Psychoactive Substances (NPS)—despite its sincere commitment to counternarcotics efforts. Effective implementation of recent legislative and regulatory measures to control licit production and trade, together with a greater commitment to information sharing and bilateral cooperation, would improve the outcomes of bilateral narcotics cooperation.

Indonesia

A. Introduction

Indonesian authorities are improving their capacity to police its borders and 17,000 islands but continue to face challenges as a major transit point and destination for illicit drugs. Crystal methamphetamine and ecstasy are the most commonly trafficked items, with primary source countries being Pakistan and Burma, based on arrests and seizures in 2023. The National Narcotics Board (BNN) estimates more than 95 percent of illicit drugs enter Indonesia by sea. For the third year in a row, however, BNN identified domestic production facilities of methamphetamine, although local production contributes only a very small percentage of methamphetamine consumed within Indonesia overall. Marijuana remains a commonly used drug in Indonesia, with domestic production in North Sumatra being the primary source.

Through the first half of 2023, Indonesian authorities seized 2.73 metric tons (MT) of methamphetamine, 4.66 MT of marijuana, and 10 million pills of other psychotropic drugs. As of 2023, Indonesia has regulated 159 New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), 85 of which have been identified in Indonesia.

Indonesia maintains some of the world's harshest drug-related laws, including mandatory minimum sentencing for possession, while trafficking is punishable by the death penalty, including for foreigners. Despite the early release of nearly 50,000 inmates since September 2022, prison populations remain at almost double their capacity, with the majority of inmates imprisoned on drug-related charges. Drug use and production within prisons continues to be a serious problem.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

Indonesia's House of Representative approved a 2.02 percent increase for BNN's budget for 2023, to approximately \$782 million. The budget focuses on national-scale priority projects in prevention and intervention of misuse, increasing accessibility for rehabilitation facilities, investigations, and other strategic

activities. 70 percent of BNN's budget goes to counternarcotics operations and 30 percent to prevention and rehabilitation activities. In September, President Joko Widodo ordered BNN to work with Indonesia's armed forces to increase rehabilitation efforts in ten key provinces. Coordination is ongoing, with activities expected to begin in 2024.

2. Supply Reduction

Indonesian authorities carried out several successful arrests and seizures in 2023. In February 2023, in coordination with the United States, Operation PRG resulted in the arrest of eight Iranian nationals and seizure of 319 kilograms (kg) of methamphetamine from a maritime vessel that sailed from Pakistan through the Indian Ocean. In March, BNN destroyed four hectares of marijuana fields in Aceh that were discovered through drone operations. In May, joint Operation Purnama, including officials from BNN, the national police (INP), and the Customs and Excise Office seized 108 kg of methamphetamine concealed in furniture from Malaysia. Intelligence indicated the methamphetamine was produced in Burma.

In early 2023 INP found a clandestine methamphetamines factory in West Jakarta, producing narcotics in a new form of vape liquid. In January 2023, INP also discovered an ecstasy pills factory in Tangerang and a synthetic tobacco factory in West Java.

On September 1, 2023, INP formed the anti-narcotics task force (P3GN) consisting of 34 provincial police jointly led by the Criminal Investigation Division. By October 18, the task force arrested 3,651 people on drug trafficking charges, with 343 remaining under investigation and another 418 transferred to rehabilitation centers. In that time, P3GN has seized over 430 kg of crystal methamphetamines and over 11,200 ecstasy pills from locations across northern Sumatra, Riau Island, and Jakarta.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

Narcotics law number 35 (2009) outlines guidance for drug user rehabilitation versus criminalization, a list of illicit substances, and the establishment of drug courts. Presidential Proclamation Number 2 of 2020 outlines the National Action

Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Drug Use and Illicit Trafficking (P4GN). BNN's drug-free "Shining Village" program is still underway with 488 member villages. The program empowers and trains local governments and communities to address prevention and rehabilitation of those suffering from substance use disorders.

A new Therapy and Rehabilitation Center Building for Victims of Narcotics, Psychotropic and Other Addictive Abuse, opened in June. The center, called Yayasan Rumoh Harapan Nagan, opened in Gampong le Beudoh, Aceh in June and has the capacity to assist 30 people at a given time. Indonesia has also started construction on their fourth national Narcotics Testing Laboratory, located in Bangkalan.

4. Corruption

The Indonesian government does not, as a matter of government policy, encourage or facilitate illicit drug production or distribution, nor is it involved in laundering the proceeds of the sale of illicit drugs. However, high ranking officials from the INP and armed forces have been identified as being involved with drug smuggling and the distribution of confiscated drugs.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

Although there are no bilateral mutual legal assistance or extradition treaties between Indonesia and the United States, Indonesia does cooperate to some extent. For example, Indonesia's domestic extradition law provides for the possibility of extradition of non-Indonesian citizens with the approval of the president. Indonesia can also rely on various multilateral treaties as a basis for mutual legal assistance.

The United States contributed to drug seizures in 2023 through information, training, and program funding. Trainings have covered a range of antinarcotics issues, including financial crimes investigations for narcotics investigators and counter transnational organized crime. U.S. programs have supported Indonesia's increasing activity on drug demand reduction, including training rehabilitation counselors. Likewise, U.S. programs work with members of Indonesia's criminal justice system regarding strategies to

address the large number of drug-related individuals in prison and to further develop its restorative justice practices.

On July 11, BNN signed a Letter of Agreement with the University of Indonesia's (UI) Faculty of Psychology to integrate Universal Treatment Curriculum (UTC) to UI's Master degree program. UI is training instructors now and will offer formal certification for rehabilitation counselors in 2024.

Indonesia was an early participant in the new Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats, launched by the United States in June 2023. Fifteen BNN officials joined the inaugural August 31 call and have signed up to co-chair a sub-working group focused on Engaging People with Substance Use and Substance Use Disorders.

D. Conclusion

Indonesia is demonstrating increased awareness of the need to address drug trafficking and increasing rates of substance abuse. Authorities are taking meaningful steps in both areas, demonstrating an increased capacity to conduct joint operations to interdict traffickers while also developing native capacity to treat substance use disorders. U.S. assistance to these efforts is meaningful and making marked contributions. Cooperation continues to improve the capacity to effectively investigate and prosecute offenders. Government efforts to amend and update Narcotics Law 35 (2009) aim to address prison overcrowding due to mandatory sentencing and aspects of corruption prevention.

Iran

Opiates, cannabis products, and methamphetamine transiting to and through Iran primarily enter the country from Afghanistan and Pakistan and are trafficked onward to Turkey, the Caucasus, Iraq, and Syria, or through maritime routes down to Africa and Asia. Considerable amounts of methamphetamine are also produced and consumed within Iran and trafficked to international markets. Corrupt elements within the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps reportedly facilitate illicit drug smuggling and profit from the drug trade. According to open-source reports, an estimated 9,000 metric tons (MT) of drugs pass through Iran annually, with Iranian authorities reportedly seizing around 1,000 MT annually. Most drugs are seized in Iran's eastern provinces bordering Pakistan and Afghanistan. According to data published by the Iranian government and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), opiates constitute about 80 percent of the drugs seized in Iran, followed by cannabis. In May 2023, the U.S. Coast Guard seized nearly two MT of heroin on a vessel which had departed from Chabahar, Iran.

Iran's Drug Control Headquarters (DCHQ) is the country's leading drug policy coordination body and reports directly to the country's president. The Law Enforcement Force (LEF) comprises the country's uniformed police units, including the Anti-Narcotics Police and border interdiction forces. The Iranian government treats illicit drug consumption as a serious challenge. DCHQ authorities estimate that approximately 2.8 million people in Iran regularly use some form of illicit drug and report that 1.3 to 1.6 million people seek treatment at addiction rehabilitation centers annually. Iranian authorities claim opium is the most widely used illicit drug in Iran, although a recent survey by Iran Open Data showed cannabis to be the most used drug in the country. The use of crystal methamphetamine has reportedly increased in recent years, particularly among women who use drugs.

Most of the Iranian government's counterdrug efforts are focused on interdiction and law enforcement, with fewer resources devoted to prevention and rehabilitation. Non-governmental organizations and the private sector manage the majority of Iran's demand reduction efforts including treatment centers.

Iran maintains liaison relationships with some neighboring countries and has made some attempts to expand law enforcement cooperation with them. For example, in June 2023, Iranian and Pakistani senior officials held a meeting in Tehran to enhance cooperation on

combatting narcotics trafficking from Afghanistan, as part of a “Triangular Initiative” brokered by UNODC. However, operational cooperation on international investigations remains limited.

UNODC maintains a field office in Tehran that provides training and capacity building to Iranian authorities on border management, combatting illicit trafficking, drug prevention and treatment, and sustainable job creation. In March 2023 UNODC signed an agreement to extend this partnership program for three more years. Drug control cooperation between Iran and European states has been limited partially due to concerns over the Iranian government’s widespread application of the death penalty for drug offenses. Nearly half of those executed by Iran in 2023 were sentenced to death on drug-related charges.

Jamaica

A. Introduction

Jamaica's location in the western Caribbean, its expansive coastline with many uncontrolled seaports (145 of 155), extensive tourist travel, and status as a major containerized cargo transshipment hub make the country an ideal drug trafficking transit location. Jamaica is the largest Caribbean source country of marijuana (decriminalized in Jamaica in 2015) and a major transit point for cocaine. Jamaican criminals use marijuana for currency to obtain guns or other contraband from criminal entities. Increased instability in Haiti has complicated Jamaican efforts to stem these problems, despite the very stable political situation in Jamaica.

The U.S. and Jamaican governments use bilateral legal assistance and extradition treaties, maritime law enforcement cooperation agreements, and information sharing to combat criminal activity. However, a Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement remains pending after many years of negotiation. Weak drug penalties and case backlogs, internal conspiracies and corruption, organized crime, gang activity, and resource constraints thwart Jamaican drug control efforts.

Jamaica prohibits the manufacture, sale, transport, and possession of MDMA (ecstasy) and methamphetamine and regulates the precursor chemicals used to produce it. The Jamaican government has not articulated a policy on scheduling new psychoactive substances.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

The United States and Jamaica have strong bilateral law enforcement cooperation on combatting illicit drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. The Jamaica Defense Force (JDF) Coast Guard is responsible for maritime law enforcement, while the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) is primarily responsible for drug enforcement on land. Jamaica's most recent national drug control strategy expired in 2021 with an updated five-year plan delayed.

Jamaica decriminalized minor marijuana possession/cultivation in 2015 and created the Cannabis Licensing Authority to develop and regulate the industry. The Jamaican government promotes the industry and exports, announcing it had issued 160 licenses through September 2023.

Jamaica's efforts to bring drug traffickers to justice are hobbled by an under-resourced and overburdened police and judicial system. Repeated delays and trial postponements contribute to significant case backlogs, leading to impunity for many offenders. In response, the Jamaican government, with U.S. government support, has made progress on reducing the case backlog with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to provide more timely justice.

The United States and Jamaica are bilateral parties to a mutual legal assistance treaty, a ship rider agreement, and an extradition treaty. In 2021, Jamaica amended its Extradition Act to facilitate extraditions by eliminating the requirement for first person witness affidavits in extradition requests. The United States and Jamaica made use of these agreements to board suspicious vessels and facilitate embarkation of law enforcement officials on other countries' vessels.

2. Supply Reduction

According to the JCF, authorities seized 1.63 metric tons (MT) of cocaine over the first nine months in 2023 (with 1.53 MT in January), an increase from 0.74 MT seized during the same period in 2022. Intelligence indicates shipments of cocaine reach Jamaica via commercial shipping containers from South and Central America, as well as via small "go-fast" watercraft. Cocaine is transshipped through the seaports onto commercial vessels or aircrafts bound for the United States. After reaching Jamaica, the cocaine is then divided for outbound shipment concealed in mail, aircraft, luggage, air freight, and human couriers.

The Jamaican government was unable to provide information on eradicated hectares (ha) of unlicensed cannabis plants and seized marijuana. For reference, in 2022 Jamaican authorities eradicated 0.809 ha of cannabis plants and seized approximately 27.35 MT of cured marijuana.

Traffickers smuggle Jamaican-grown marijuana out of the country via commercial shipping and small watercraft. Small fishing vessels and speedboats carry marijuana to Central America, Haiti, the Cayman Islands, and The Bahamas. Police and customs officials target marijuana shipments smuggled via commercial shipping to the United States.

U.S. law enforcement agencies work closely with Jamaican police and customs officials to develop leads, share information, and facilitate interdiction of drug shipments originating in or transiting through Jamaica. In the first nine months of 2023, 371 people were arrested for drug crimes, compared to 548 arrests in 2022.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

The Ministry of Health's National Council on Drug Abuse provides assessment, counseling, and treatment services for substance abusers and conducts prevention programs for targeted populations, including children and parents.

In 2023, the Council conducted a National Drug Prevalence Survey among 12 to 65-year-olds to determine the prevalence and patterns of drug use. The Council also conducted the Global School Based Student Health Survey among more than 3,000 13 to 17-year-olds in 23 secondary schools in St. Catherine. Results indicate high levels of alcohol, cannabis, and tobacco use among students as well as indications of MDMA use.

Increased demand for drug prevention and treatment services persists. The Jamaican government operates one detoxification center and offers services at Kingston's Bellevue Hospital. Drug treatment remains underfunded and under resourced. Significant partnerships include the United States, Organization of American States, European Union, World Health Organization, and the United Nations, with capacity building taking place among key local stakeholders for the development of a National Early Warning System on Drugs to detect and respond to New Psychoactive Substances.

4. Corruption

As a matter of policy, the Jamaican government does not encourage or facilitate illegal activity associated with drug trafficking or the laundering of proceeds from illicit drug transactions. Jamaican law penalizes corruption, corruption remains entrenched and widespread in practice, even among senior government officials. The judicial system has a poor record of prosecuting corruption cases against law enforcement and government officials. Internal conspiracy schemes at Jamaica's airports and seaports facilitate the movement of drug shipments across borders, and organized crime leaders have historically had ties to government officials.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

The U.S. and Jamaican governments coordinate closely on shared priorities related to illicit drug control, including investigative capacity, customs cooperation, maritime security, and support to the judicial system. The Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) provided support to Jamaica, including training, equipment, and logistical assistance for interdicting illicit drugs and trafficked firearms as well as support to combat money laundering, financial fraud, and other organized crime. The United States has supported the JCF's Narcotics Division and the JDF's Military Intelligence Unit and Coast Guard with equipment and training. The United States also continues to raise concerns about illicit drug trafficking with the Jamaican government as well as transportation agencies and commercial shippers. The U.S. and Jamaican governments have been negotiating a bilateral Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement, which would facilitate increased cooperation to stem customs crimes, but it remains pending after nearly 20 years.

D. Conclusion

Cooperation between Jamaica and the United States related to drug trafficking and transnational crime continued to be strong in 2023. Further significant progress against drug trafficking will depend on efforts to arrest and prosecute high-level drug traffickers and their accomplices, increase penalties for drug trafficking, combat internal conspiracies and corruption, increase extraditions, implement a national drug strategy, and provide swift justice to hold drug traffickers accountable.

Jordan

Jordan is both a transit country for illegal drugs being trafficked from Syria and Lebanon to more lucrative markets in the Gulf, and a consumer market. A relatively small amount of marijuana is grown illegally in Jordan.

Jordan is taking the threat posed by illegal drugs seriously. For the first nine months of 2023, compared to the same period in 2022, there was a 24 percent increase in arrests for all drug crimes with drug trafficking arrests increasing by 32 percent, from 6,921 to 9,177.

The 1995 U.S.-Jordan extradition treaty continues to be in force, although Jordan does not view the treaty as valid under Jordanian law. Additionally, while the United States and Jordan signed a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty in 2013, the Jordanian Parliament has not ratified it.

As Jordan increased security on its border with Syria, drug traffickers countered by altering their smuggling methods. One notable trend has been an increase in the smuggling of small amounts of drugs by drones, especially crystal methamphetamine. In terms of overall seizures by authorities, comparing the first nine months of 2023 to the same period in 2022, authorities seized significantly lower amounts of captagon pills (9 million vs. 51 million), hashish (2,100 kilograms (kg) vs. 4,700 kg), cocaine (91 kg vs. 127 kg), and marijuana (101 kg vs. 124 kg), while seizing slightly more crystal methamphetamine (53 kg vs. 45 kg).

There is no definitive data available on illegal drug use in Jordan, but anecdotally, cannabis and captagon are the most widely consumed illegal drugs. Crystal methamphetamine appears to be increasing in popularity based on the increase in seizures, arrests, and those seeking treatment related to the drug.

Jordan's Public Security Directorate conducts regular drug awareness and prevention campaigns, with a heavy focus on schools and universities. The government operates three drug addiction treatment centers that provide free addiction treatment. There also are two private clinics in Jordan that offer drug treatment services for a fee. There are no in-patient treatment options for those under 18 years of age. The government-run treatment centers rely heavily on religious and spiritual focused lectures and counseling. The effectiveness of their addiction treatment programs is uncertain.

The government of Jordan does not encourage or facilitate illegal activities associated with drug trafficking, nor is there evidence that senior government officials are engaged in such activity. There were no INL-funded units in Jordan in 2023.

Kazakhstan

A. Introduction

Kazakhstan is located on the Northern Route, a major drug trafficking route from Afghanistan to Russia, Europe, Asia, Canada, and the United States and serves as a transit country for heroin, methamphetamine, opium, cannabis, and hashish. A drug trafficking route has also emerged from Iran to Kazakhstan on the Caspian Sea, then to Russia by land. Kazakhstan has approximately 144 hectares of wild cannabis, most of which are located in the Chu valley on its border with the Kyrgyz Republic. In some regions of the country there are also fields of hemp. Synthetic drug production has proliferated throughout the country.

Drugs transiting the country and precursors used for the manufacture of synthetic drugs are masked as legal goods and chemicals arriving as cargo from neighboring countries. Drugs frequently are sold online, and synthetic drugs are cheap and easily obtained.

The country has a growing domestic synthetic drug consumption problem, especially among youth. Addiction to legal pharmaceuticals is also widespread.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments/Policies and Trends

1. Institutional Development

In response to President Tokayev's September 2022 directive to intensify the fight against synthetic drugs, on June 29, 2023, the Government of Kazakhstan approved a Comprehensive Strategy to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking for the years 2023-2025. The plan aims to strengthen counternarcotics legislation, increase the capacity and status of law enforcement agencies, equip border checkpoints and forensic laboratories with modern equipment, implement an early warning system for incoming cargo, better account for drug users, prevent and treat drug addiction, and modernize current treatment and reintegration facilities, as well as increase the number of such facilities. The government allocated \$118 million to support the

execution of this plan. The government previously funded a similar program for 2012-2016.

Kazakhstan participates in many international initiatives, including projects of the United Nations on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Container Control Programme, the Border Liaison Initiative, and the European Union-funded Central Asian Drug Action Programme (CADAP 7). Kazakhstan is also a member and financial contributor to the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre (CARICC). On July 7, 2023, Kazakhstan joined the Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Threats launched by the United States and is co-chairing a Sub-Working Group on "Addressing Populations in Contact with the Criminal Justice System, including Alternatives to Incarceration." Kazakh law enforcement agencies actively cooperate with the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) regional office on joint transnational counternarcotics operations. During 2023, the Prosecutor General's Office of Kazakhstan participated in joint counternarcotics operations with DEA.

Kazakhstan has a mutual legal assistance agreement with the United States.

2. Supply Reduction

The primary agencies with counternarcotics responsibilities are the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the National Security Committee (including the Border Guard Service), and the Agency for Financial Monitoring, including its Financial Investigative Unit and the Service on Economic Investigations.

According to Kazakh law enforcement, some synthetic drugs are smuggled into Kazakhstan, but it is easier to import precursor chemicals for local manufacture. In the first nine months of 2023, authorities identified and closed 74 clandestine laboratories manufacturing synthetic drugs (compared to 46 for the same period in 2022). In particular, the National Security Committee disrupted 30 international and regional drug trafficking channels and 29 domestic laboratories in the first nine months of 2023. In total, around one metric ton (MT) of synthetic drugs and over 76 MT of precursors were seized.

Mephedrone and alpha-PVP were the most common synthetic drugs manufactured in clandestine laboratories. The low cost of synthetic drugs, combined with negative

perceptions of heroin use, factored into illegal drug users' increased preference for synthetic drugs.

Drug traffickers work with chemists from Ukraine and Russia, who travel to Kazakhstan to produce synthetic drugs. Previously, the production of synthetics was mostly limited to Almaty and the northern regions, but is gradually spreading to other regions. Some clandestine laboratories have advanced equipment and sufficient storage for large volumes of precursor chemicals. Domestically manufactured synthetic drugs are destined for domestic distribution, as well as distribution to Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries.

In the first nine months of 2023, Kazakh law enforcement agencies seized 73 kilograms (kg) of heroin (compared to 33 kg for the same period in 2022); 730 kg of hashish (compared to 670 kg for the same period in 2022); 68 kg of opium (compared to 35 kg for the same period in 2022), and 6.5 metric tons of cannabis (compared to four MT in 2022). In most cases, the drugs were detected with the help of canine teams and use of specialized equipment.

Kazakhstan's National Security Committee conducted counternarcotics operations on the Caspian Sea. A controlled buy on September 3 prevented a drug smuggling attempt from Iran to Kazakhstan in speedboats and resulted in the seizure of 15 kg of opium, 20 kg of hashish, and 50 packs of the painkiller tramadol. In March, officials disrupted a stable supply channel for opiates from Iran to Kazakhstan through the Caspian Sea. Four foreigners were detained for smuggling 30 kg of opium and 100 methadone tablets using speedboats.

Encrypted messaging platforms pose problems to countering drug trafficking online, the most common sales medium for synthetic drugs. In the first nine months of 2023, law enforcement agencies shut down 2,700 websites associated with distributing synthetic drugs, compared to 1,787 during the same period of 2022.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

Among drug users, adolescents generally use pharmaceutical drugs like tramadol, and young adults use synthetic drugs. Older users generally use cannabis, hashish, or heroin. In 2023, the government registered 18,243 people for drug use treatment

(compared to 18,130 for the same period in 2022), including 1,498 women and 97 juveniles. Registering as an addict with the government is typically the last recourse for treatment due to the stigma attached to addiction and the restrictions that registration imposes on government employment, other social benefits, and marriage. The Community Anti-Drug Coalition of America continued its program for community based anti-drug programming in six regions of Kazakhstan with support from the United States.

4. Corruption

The Government of Kazakhstan does not, as a matter of government policy, encourage or facilitate illicit drug production or distribution, nor is it involved in laundering the proceeds of the sale of illicit drugs. Combating public corruption is a priority for the Kazakh government.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

U.S. drug control programs aim to improve Kazakhstan's capacity to combat drug trafficking and drug demand. The United States supports counternarcotics capacity building, with a focus on countering drug-related money laundering, countering trafficking of synthetic narcotics, and strengthening drug treatment curriculum at medical schools. All U.S. government programs enjoy host-government support.

D. Conclusion

Recognizing gaps in legislation and its currently limited capacity to counter drug trafficking and substance use, Kazakhstan adopted a new national strategy that demonstrates its continued commitment to combat drug trafficking and engage in international cooperation. The need continues to address challenges associated with a re-activated "Northern Route," increased domestic manufacture of synthetic drugs, minors and young people involved in both trafficking and consumption of synthetic drugs, and treatment of drug users.

Kenya

Kenya is a transit country for illicit drugs; domestic drug consumption is growing but not at crisis levels. Precursor chemicals continue to transit Kenya. Criminal syndicates grow cannabis and miraa (khat) domestically for local use and export. Kenya's location on the East African coast is attractive for traffickers moving drugs from Asia and Latin America to Europe and the Arabian Peninsula.

Heroin enters Kenya via shipping across the Indian Ocean from Southwest Asia and across the Tanzanian border. Most heroin transiting Kenya is destined for international markets, principally Europe. Domestic heroin abuse is a growing concern, especially along the coast. Cocaine enters Kenya primarily via transshipment through Ethiopia. The amount of cocaine entering from Uganda and seized in Kenya has increased the last year. In 2023 authorities intercepted both drugs and suspected drug-related cash transiting Jomo Kenyatta International Airport.

Kenya's primary drug enforcement agency is the Anti-Narcotics Unit within the Directorate of Criminal Investigations. Kenya is a member of the Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCOC), which coordinates maritime security in the Western Indian Ocean. No significant interdiction operations took place off Kenya's coast in 2023.

During the first nine months of 2023, the Anti-Narcotics Unit made 44 arrests and seized approximately 26 kilograms (kg) of heroin, 35 kg of cocaine, 13.5 kg of methamphetamine, and small quantities of ketamine and tramadol. Other Kenyan law enforcement also seized 1257 kg of ketamine, Kenya's largest recorded seizure of that substance. Based on information received from the United States and the Belgian government, Kenyan authorities seized approximately \$15,000 in cash and nine vehicles linked to suspected drug trafficking.

An extradition treaty exists between the United States and Kenya. While no bilateral mutual legal assistance treaty exists between the two countries, Kenya is a party to multilateral law enforcement conventions that enable providing mutual legal assistance to the United States.

The National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA) is a demand reduction agency that educates Kenyans on the dangers of substance abuse.

NACADA operates a 24-hour helpline for addiction counseling and referrals to treatment as well as family support.

Drug trafficking is both a source and driver of official corruption in Kenya. Kenya's National Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission maintains oversight of drug-related corruption. Kenyan law enforcement supports U.S. investigations and conducts its own investigations into corrupt officials directly or indirectly involved in drug-related crimes, such as money laundering and obstruction of justice.

Kyrgyz Republic

A. Introduction

The Kyrgyz Republic lies along a significant transit route for the movement of illegal drugs transiting north from bordering countries to Russia and Europe. It shares a border with the Republic of Tajikistan, which has a common border with Afghanistan. The Kyrgyz Republic's southern provinces, which border Tajikistan, are the most vulnerable, have limited resources, and face significant border security issues. Illicit drugs are primarily smuggled into the country from Tajikistan across un-demarcated borders. The Taliban takeover in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of U.S. and coalition forces in 2022 contributed to an increase in the volume of drug trafficking. The market for synthetic drugs in the Kyrgyz Republic has changed from a single substance, a synthetic form of cannabis – “Spice/K2” - to hundreds of structurally diverse substances.

The Counter Narcotics Service (CNS) under the Kyrgyz Ministry of Interior (MOI) is responsible for countering the illicit trafficking of drugs, psychotropic substances, and their precursors. The Ministry of Health controls the legal use of narcotic drugs. The Kyrgyz Republic has shown a commitment to fighting drug use. Domestically, the Kyrgyz Republic continues to work on identifying new psychoactive substances (NPS), coordinating law enforcement activities to improve interdiction, and improving border controls.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

The National Development Program of the Kyrgyz Republic until 2026 was approved by Presidential Decree in October 2021. The Cabinet of Ministers approved the action plan in December 2021 and in December 2022, the Cabinet of Ministers issued another decree for an Action Plan for 2023. The Program seeks to strengthen law enforcement and toughen penalties for drug crimes including sale of drugs or psychotropic substances, involvement in distribution, and advertising drugs on the Internet. A national mechanism for notifying international systems about new synthetic drugs is included in the plan. The draft Law of Narcotic Drugs,

Psychotropic Substances, and their Precursors is still pending approval by Parliament.

The Kyrgyz Republic is a member of the Central Asia Regional Information and Coordination Center (CARICC), which promotes regional information sharing and cooperative operations to combat transnational drug trafficking. The Kyrgyz Republic does not have an extradition agreement or mutual legal assistance agreement with the United States. It is a signatory to multilateral legal instruments that can be used to facilitate cooperation.

2. Supply Reduction

The CNS announced its drug report for the first nine months of 2023, noting the percentage of resolved drug offenses increased by 13.5 percent compared with the same period last year. The report further notes that 59 criminal drug activities were prevented and nine drug laboratories were liquidated, of which three were for synthetics and six were for cannabis. The security forces detained 120 people wanted for drug crimes. The Ministry of Internal Affairs estimates the value of the activities disrupted was approximately \$50 million.

In the first nine months of 2023, law enforcement agencies of the Kyrgyz Republic registered 1,093 drug crimes, and the seizure of seven metric tons and 341 kilograms (kg) of psychotropic substances and precursors, a 19.8 percent increase from last year. Authorities also reported the seizure of 168 kg of hashish, 14 kg of heroin, five kg of opium, 143 kg of marijuana, and 150 kg of other psychotropic substances.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

The United States supports the Kyrgyz Republic through advocacy programs aimed at improving access to quality drug prevention and treatment services. These programs include organizing high-level advocacy meetings, supporting technical expert groups, reviewing legal documents, and building capacity of health care workers and civil society organizations to assist key populations.

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America works with a local NGO “Door-Eli” and CNS on healthy and drug-free-lifestyle promotion programs in communities throughout the country. UNODC, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the Ministry of Health implemented a set of programs to support the legal framework on drug control, strengthened interagency cooperation, and trained law enforcement officers in fighting drug trafficking.

The Republican Center for Bloodborne Viral Hepatitis and HIV Control reported that HIV and hepatitis C prevalence among people who inject drugs is significantly higher than among the general population. The United States, via the Centers for Disease Control and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) provides technical and financial support to the Republican Psychology and Narcology Center to provide evidence-based harm-reduction services, such as opioid substitution therapy (OST) and integrated HIV and viral hepatitis services. As of June 2023, there were 763 individuals, including 58 females, receiving OST with U.S. support in the Kyrgyz Republic. Harm reduction programming is also provided through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria grants in close collaboration and partnership with CDC. Harm reduction programs have been funded by PEPFAR and the Global Fund, but starting in 2023, the Kyrgyz government began to allocate money from the state budget and now covers approximately half of the cost of opioid substitution therapy services. There is no funding for community-based harm reduction activities (such as needle and syringe programs) from host government and there are challenges in implementing and expanding evidence-based programs due to the influence of countries such as Russia that approach drug-use from a more punitive perspective. There is evidence that people, particularly young users, are increasingly using NPS, synthetic drugs, and amphetamine-type stimulants, which requires a shift in government and clinical strategies.

4. Corruption

The Kyrgyz Republic government does not encourage or facilitate illicit drug production or distribution, nor is it involved in laundering the proceeds of the sale of illicit drugs. However, the Government recently passed a law on asset amnesty which creates risks for the possible legalization of funds obtained by illegal means, including through the sale of illicit drugs.

However, there are instances of corruption among law enforcement agencies and politicians in aiding in the transport of drugs. The government has prioritized combatting corruption, but results are mixed, and corruption remains widespread. Criminal liability for corruption remains the same, however, the government has not implemented the law effectively. The payment of bribes to avoid investigation or prosecution is still pervasive.

The Kyrgyz Republic has enacted a law entitled “On Combatting Corruption” and developed an Anti-Corruption Strategy that will remain in place until 2024.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

U.S. law enforcement-related policy objectives in the Kyrgyz Republic include strengthening the capacity of law enforcement to investigate and prosecute criminal cases and enhancing anti-corruption and counternarcotics cooperation through increasing capacity to identify and seize assets obtained through illegal activity. Another objective is to facilitate the development, implementation and strengthening of law enforcement’s ability to address issues of cyber-crime and data protection.

There has been little engagement from the MOI, the State Customs Service, or the State Border Service in countering narcotics trafficking. A memorandum of cooperation between the MOI and the United States designed to replace the previous memorandum remains stalled.

D. Conclusion

The Kyrgyz Republic’s location makes it a prime candidate for transshipping and stockpiling drugs, as they can then be shipped to Kazakhstan, Russia, and to the borders of the European Union without further customs checks. Sources in the MOI believe it will be impossible to stop the flow of drug trafficking until the Kyrgyz and Tajik authorities resolve their border dispute. The CNS currently lacks the capacity to effectively address drug smuggling but has shown a willingness to work with international partners to address this issue.

Laos

A. Introduction

Combatting drug trafficking remained a national priority for the Lao government in 2023 and historic seizures of synthetic drugs offered some evidence of political will to tackle the problem. Landlocked with roughly 3,000 miles of porous borders with Burma, China, Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam, Laos is an essential transit route for transnational criminal organizations moving drugs and precursor chemicals through Southeast Asia. There was no evidence of domestic drug manufacturing in 2023, and the cultivation of illicit opium poppy was largely stable compared to 2022 and 2021. Drugs transiting Laos did not reach the United States, but were intended to reach large markets in East Asia, Australia, and New Zealand. Spillover from drug trafficking through Laos contributed to growing domestic consumption, with higher numbers of citizens abusing methamphetamine tablets, or “yaba” at prices as low as 20 cents a pill. Trafficking of ketamine spiked in 2023 as evidenced by significant seizures in the first half of the year, with anecdotal reports of its growing popularity as a party drug among Lao youth.

Besides the challenges imposed by geography, drug control institutions have been hampered by scarce resources, low capacity of law enforcement officers, and an approach focused almost exclusively on ad-hoc seizures. While this resulted in historic interdictions, the plummeting price of methamphetamine suggests that law enforcement efforts have failed to constrain the drug market. Law enforcement must conduct more sophisticated operations that target mid-level and higher traffickers to disrupt and dismantle transnational criminal organizations.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

The 2021 Law on Narcotics and the National Agenda for Drug and Precursor Chemical Control provides the framework for government efforts to fight drug trafficking and use. These fall into five broad categories: preventive education; alternative development; treatment and rehabilitation; law enforcement; and international cooperation. Laos has acceded to multilateral conventions that could

enable law enforcement cooperation, but in 2023 there was no bilateral extradition or mutual legal assistance agreement with the United States. The Office of the Supreme People's Prosecutor is the country's focal point for mutual legal assistance, but to date Laos has submitted or responded to only a handful of requests with Thailand and Vietnam. Operational law enforcement information must be shared with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and transmitted through multiple layers of bureaucracy before it reaches the relevant police unit, often causing delays that result in missed enforcement opportunities.

2. Supply Reduction

Methamphetamine, manufactured in eastern Burma and smuggled into Laos through uncontrolled border areas in the Golden Triangle, has captured the domestic drug market, with prices so low that even low-income citizens can afford its purchase. Through various routes, mostly through Laos, traffickers move drugs from Burma to Vietnam, China, Thailand, and Cambodia, and eventually to markets in East Asia, the Pacific Islands, Australia, and New Zealand. While no evidence of drug production in Laos surfaced in 2023, government officials have acknowledged the possibility of small clandestine labs operating in the country. Stakeholders from diplomatic missions and international organizations suspect that the Golden Triangle Special Economic Zone (the project of U.S. Treasury-sanctioned Zhao Wei, which is administered largely without oversight from Lao authorities) facilitates a range of transnational crimes, including narcotics trafficking from Burma into Laos. In April 2023, a truck that crashed into a concrete barrier at the Zone's entrance was found to be carrying more than seven million tablets of methamphetamine and a kilogram of crystal methamphetamine.

In the first six months of 2023, Lao law enforcement agencies reported 2,240 drug-related cases. Drug seizures in the first eight months of the year included approximately 34 million methamphetamine tablets, 185 kilograms (kg) of heroin, 125 kg of opium, 155 kg of ketamine, and 1.6 metric tons (MT) of crystal methamphetamine (ice). Authorities in Luang Namtha Province reported that in January 2023, law enforcement seized 63 MT of hydrochloric acid, a precursor chemical required for the production of synthetic drugs. The trucks carrying the chemical reportedly came from central Laos and were destined for a river crossing to

Burma, evidence that precursor chemicals originating from China transit various routes – often through Laos – to reach synthetic drug production facilities in Burma’s Shan State.

The results of the opium survey funded by the United States and implemented by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) were still pending in October 2023, due to a weather-related delayed start in 2022. Through other means, the Lao government reported it had identified 357.6 hectares of opium poppy fields located in the north of the country and that 251.7 hectares of poppies were eradicated.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

At the request of central and provincial authorities, the United States initiated a new UNODC-implemented alternative development project in October 2023, in three districts of the province of Phongsaly. It is aimed at replicating the success of the U.S.-funded alternative development project in neighboring Houaphanh Province, which supported the cultivation and export of high-quality coffee from 38 districts known previously for growing opium poppy.

The Lao government reported an approximate number of 55,000 drug users in the country. International experts assess this is a vast underestimation. The Ministry of Public Security supervised mandatory inpatient treatment of 2,648 citizens at 13 drug treatment centers in the first six months of 2023. Government officials noted that many drug addicted, first time criminal offenders were sentenced to drug treatment in lieu of much heavier potential sentences. The United States continued to advocate for the adoption of evidence-based drug treatment and, in cooperation with the Lao government and UNODC, supported 28 community-based drug treatment clinics located around the country. Following U.S. and UNODC engagement, the government agreed in 2023 to a methadone pilot program to treat addicts in Houaphanh Province, the first such program in Laos and a positive sign of the government’s openness to modernizing drug treatment practices in the country.

4. Corruption

Public information on corruption remained scarce, but it was generally assumed to be pervasive in the government sector. Senior officials publicly condemned

corruption, and the State Inspection and Anticorruption Agency indicated a willingness to cooperate with the United States on anticorruption programming. In practice, however, disciplinary action manifested in positional assignment or dismissal and not within the justice system.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

The National Assembly and officials at all levels regularly state that countering illegal drugs is a priority. In general, stakeholder agencies are open to bilateral with the United States. Efforts to build capabilities to counter narcotics trafficking and transnational crime have benefited law enforcement agencies and other justice sector entities. The United States is supporting projects to build a new headquarters and training facility for Lao Customs Department and will provide warehouse capacity to house illicit seizures. Customs and police are beneficiaries of projects that bolster capabilities to identify and safely divert synthetic drugs and precursor chemicals, and new projects are in development to assist in their secure destruction. These include support for prosecutorial units at the district level, to better supervise police narcotics investigations in northern provinces that are home to high-intensity trafficking routes. Judges are benefitting from workshops on cybercrime to increase their understanding of the sophisticated tools utilized by traffickers. Projects in development in 2023 will support mutual legal assistance and international cooperation led by the Office of the Supreme People's Prosecutor and will seek to streamline internal processes in the People's Supreme Court.

D. Conclusion

The Lao government's efforts to combat drug trafficking are sincere but hampered by low capacity, financial constraints, and the lack of sustained political will to address corruption. Significant drug seizures are evidence of real commitment to counter the flow of drugs, but continued inaction to address the role of the Golden Triangle Special Economic Zone in the facilitation of transnational crime suggests acceptance of the status quo at senior levels of government. U.S.-funded programs can strengthen law enforcement and justice sector capacity to interrupt narcotics trafficking and punish those responsible, but gains will be incremental. Streamlining Lao bureaucratic controls

that inhibit assistance cooperation would speed progress, as would the invigoration of anticorruption efforts.

Liberia

A. Introduction

Liberia is not a regular transit country or key producer of illicit drugs bound for the United States or Europe. Yet, a 2022 seizure of cocaine with an estimated \$100 million value may indicate a possible South American cartel attempt to establish an expanded foothold. The country's limited law enforcement capacity, inadequate border controls, corrupt judiciary, and proximity to major drug transit routes contribute to trafficking, mostly of cocaine and heroin, to and through Liberia and onward to other West African countries and possibly Europe. Local drug use, especially locally grown cannabis, is not uncommon. Other illicit drugs consumed within Liberia include heroin (mostly smoked), cocaine (snorted), and more recently Kush (Cannabis Indica's type flower), mixed with different substances including heroin or synthetic dimethyltryptamine (DMT), and recent cases of a new combination of stevia tea leaves soaked in methamphetamine trafficked from Kenya.

Due to poor transportation and infrastructure and a lack of government capacity and resources there is no reliable data on drug consumption or overall trends in the country. There is no evidence of synthetic opioids being trafficked through Liberia. Most locally consumed drugs produced elsewhere enter Liberia by foot and vehicle traffic across land borders, with commercial aircraft and maritime vessels also used. Drug use among the country's youth is becoming a significant problem and a growing public health concern.

Liberia is not significantly involved in the manufacture, production, transshipment, or trafficking of synthetic drugs. The Government of Liberia has no articulated policies on scheduling of New Psychoactive Substances.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

The Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency (LDEA), Liberia National Police (LNP), Liberia Coast Guard (under the Armed Forces of Liberia), and National Security Agency

(NSA) share responsibility for addressing drug trafficking in Liberia. Nigerian criminal networks traffic drugs into and through Liberia. Local authorities work with the United States and other international partners to combat transnational crime. The LDEA and LNP have coordination and information sharing capabilities with Interpol's West African Police Information System (WAPIS) through the Data Collection and Registration Center (DACORE), which has access to the criminal records registered in five databases within INTERPOL's secure global police communications system, the I-24/7. The LDEA continues to improve its operational capacity and professionalism through using confidential sources; work with private businesses; initiating controlled deliveries; investigation of international smuggling groups; and interagency coordination. The U.S.-Liberia extradition treaty has been in effect since 1939. While no mutual legal assistance treaty between Liberia and the United States exists, both countries are nevertheless able to provide each other such assistance, and Liberia is a party to multilateral conventions that enable such cooperation.

2. Supply Reduction

Marijuana is the most widely available drug in Liberia. Little information is available on the extent of local cannabis cultivation and local trafficking networks, but the public does not view local cultivation as a major concern. During the first nine months of 2023, the LDEA seized approximately 6.6 kilograms (kg) of heroin, a decrease from the 20 kg seized in 2022. The 202.7 kg of cocaine seized in 2023 along with the 520 kg seized in 2022, marked a milestone in cocaine seizures in Liberia. The LDEA also seized 1.93 metric tons (MT) of marijuana and 31.7 kg of Kush. The LDEA referred 177 drug cases to the courts for prosecution, including 255 arrests. However, convictions are elusive because of inherent weaknesses within the judicial system. On September 11 and 21, 2023, the LDEA team deployed at Roberts International Airport seized 232 kg and 72 kg of stevia tea leaves impregnated with methamphetamine from two separate shipments. Both shipments appear to have originated from the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Kenya. These seizures represent a new kind of drug in Liberia and it is presumed they were to be sold locally as Kush.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

There are no recent data available on current drug use within Liberia, though anecdotal reports indicate that drug use has significantly increased in the emerging middle class and is common in the expat and Lebanese communities. Due to a lack of resources and capacity, the government has conducted very little drug prevention, rehabilitation, or treatment since the 1970s (pre-civil war). Persons with substance use disorders are referred to the only psychiatric hospital in Liberia or to one of the few nongovernmental organizations working in the field. The LDEA's participation in the International Day Against Illicit Drugs-World Drug Day (June 26) is its largest annual awareness campaign activity and culminates with an annual drug burn attended by journalists and dignitaries. An Act to amend Chapter 14, title 26 of the Penal Code was signed and published July 12, 2023. This amendment results in all first-degree felony drug offenses being considered 'grave offenses' and non-bailable.

4. Corruption

The Government of Liberia does not, as a matter of government policy, encourage or facilitate the production or distribution of illicit drugs, but some politicians, law enforcement entities, and government officials are believed to be beneficiaries of the drug trade in Liberia. Insufficient political will and resources, an ineffective judicial system, and inadequate salaries for government employees and law enforcement officials facilitate corruption. The United States supports programs aimed at curbing corruption in the judiciary and elsewhere.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

The United States works with Liberia to address international drug trafficking and efforts to curb local demand. Among ongoing initiatives, the United States is funding a \$2.5 million project through the UNODC to enhance Liberian law enforcement capacity to counter transnational crime and trafficking of drugs and other contraband. The United States also supports a drug demand reduction project implemented by the Colombo Plan, designed to develop certified health care providers in the specialized areas of drug prevention, drug treatment and drug recovery. U.S. assistance seeks to build Liberia's capacity to develop criminal cases against international trafficking organizations active

in the country and encourage judicial case processing and attorney understanding of anti-drug laws, while simultaneously reducing drug usage in Liberia.

D. Conclusion

The Government of Liberia has stated its commitment to preventing transnational criminal organizations from gaining a major foothold in its territory. However, it lacks the political will, resources, and capacity to effectively do so. Despite significant constraints, the LDEA is also working with other regional drug enforcement entities to exchange intelligence and information. While arrests have been made, the LDEA has been frustrated by an inability to secure prosecutions in drug seizure cases. The United States will continue to support and assist Liberia's efforts to strengthen its law enforcement capacities and fulfill its international drug control commitments.

Malaysia

Malaysia is a transit country for drugs destined primarily for Australia. It is not a source country for illicit drugs bound for the United States. Traffickers smuggle crystal methamphetamine, MDMA (ecstasy), cannabis, heroin, and ketamine into Malaysia.

The Royal Malaysia Police (RMP) reported they arrested 46,656 persons for drug violations and 18,882 persons for drug trafficking between January and September 2023. The RMP also dismantled 19 clandestine laboratories from January to September 2023. Malaysian law enforcement agencies seized 554 kilograms (kg) of heroin, 6.2 metric tons (MT) of methamphetamine, 21 kg of cocaine, 843 kg of ketamine, 778 kg of MDMA, and 2.7 kg of cannabis from January to September 2023. Unlike previous years, none of these seizures indicated a connection to Mexican transnational criminal organizations. These arrest and seizure numbers reflect an increase from the same period in 2022.

The RMP reported 56,281 new people with substance use disorders in Malaysia, especially involving methamphetamine, from January to September 2023. The Malaysian government is committed to addressing the public health aspects of drug use. The government struggles, however, to successfully prosecute cases against drug trafficking organizations, in part due to inadequate conspiracy laws and the high burden of proof required for a conviction. In April 2023, the Malaysian parliament repealed the death penalty as mandatory punishment for 11 crimes, including drug trafficking. Although the death penalty remains a potential sentence for these crimes, judges now have the discretion to impose 30–40-year prison sentences or other punishments as alternatives to the death penalty.

Malaysia cooperates with the United States and other international partners on drug control issues. Malaysian authorities attended U.S.-funded counternarcotic and drug/chemical diversion training in 2023. Malaysia has extradition and mutual legal assistance treaties with the United States.

Malaysia actively participates in multilateral drug control efforts, including implementing commitments under the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the three major United Nations drug control treaties. The RMP is successfully using its three Narcotics Nucleus Centers, which share intelligence and coordinate operations with neighboring countries, to enhance cross-border and maritime investigations.

Mexico

A. Introduction

Mexico remains a source and transit country for illicit drugs trafficked to the United States, including synthetic drugs such as fentanyl and methamphetamine as well as cocaine, heroin, and marijuana. Testing of seizures in the United States indicates over 90 percent of heroin comes from Mexico. Companies in the People's Republic of China (PRC) are the largest source of precursor chemicals and equipment used to manufacture illicit fentanyl and other synthetic drugs in Mexico. Despite numerous illicit synthetic drug clandestine lab seizures, the Mexican government has not consistently acknowledged publicly that fentanyl production occurs in Mexico. U.S.-Mexico counterdrug collaboration focuses on curtailing drug production by denying revenue to transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) responsible for production and trafficking, pursuing TCOs through investigations and prosecutions, and inhibiting cross-border movements of illicit drugs, chemical precursors, and other contraband including cash and weapons that fuel violence and conflict between TCOs and Mexican security institutions.

Based on seizure data and law enforcement investigation information, the consensus among U.S. authorities is that Mexico was the only significant source of illicit fentanyl or fentanyl analogues trafficked into the United States in 2023.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

The administration of President Andres Manuel López Obrador continues to focus its security strategy on reducing crime and violence through social programs that seek to address poverty and social inequalities and through a new federal security force — the National Guard. López Obrador created the National Guard upon assuming office in 2018 as a federal security force to replace the Federal Police and in September 2022 attempted to formally transfer authority over the National Guard to the Mexican army (SEDENA). The Mexican supreme court, however, ruled the

transfer unconstitutional, leaving the guard under the authority of the Security Secretariat (SSPC).

Mexico's 2024 budget proposal would increase justice and national security spending by 7.7 percent from 2023 levels. SEDENA's budget would increase 5.2 percent to \$6.5 billion (excluding major infrastructure projects totaling approximately \$8 billion). SEDENA would also manage the National Guard's budget, which amounts to \$4.1 billion in 2024, pending Congressional approval. The Mexican Navy's (SEMAR) 2024 budget would increase 21.4 percent to \$2.8 billion from 2023 (also excluding major infrastructure projects of approximately \$1.2 billion). The budget for the judicial branch would increase by 8 percent to \$4.7 billion. Despite these proposed increases, underfunding of security and justice sector institutions at the federal and subnational level remains a concern. An estimated 93 percent of crimes go unreported or uninvestigated, eroding trust in public institutions.

The U.S.-Mexico extradition treaty has been in force since 1980. Extraditions to the United States decreased during the COVID-19 pandemic, but 2022 saw the most extraditions since 2012. A bilateral mutual legal assistance treaty in force since 1991 fosters a broad range of cooperation in criminal matters. Mexico engages with Canada and the United States in the North American Drug Dialogue (NADD) to foster drug policy coordination and in the North American Maritime Security Initiative (NAMSI) to share information, improve response to transnational threats, and develop protocols for maritime interdictions. Mexico is a voting member of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs and coordinates with the United States on international scheduling decisions.

2. Supply Reduction

Mexican statistics underscore a continued shift in production and trafficking from plant-based drugs like marijuana and heroin to synthetic drugs such as methamphetamine and fentanyl. Synthetic opioids like fentanyl require far fewer resources and time to produce relative to plant-derived drugs, and are highly potent in small quantities – potentially reducing risk for drug producers and traffickers, and increasing their profit.

According to Mexico's 2023 President's Annual Report, in 2022 Mexico reportedly seized 70.8 metric tons (MT) of marijuana, 42.3 kilograms (kg) of opium gum, and 172.7 kg of heroin, in 2022, all representing significant reductions from 2021 seizures. The annual report did not include data on cocaine seizures. The President's Monthly Security Reports indicated Mexico seized 2,086 kg of fentanyl; 36.22 MT of methamphetamine; 1,156 hectares (ha) of cannabis, and 12,033 ha of opium poppy in 2022, all representing slight increases from amounts seized in 2021.

The President's Annual Report also noted Mexico eradicated 1,189.5 ha of cannabis and 8,438.8 ha of opium poppy, and seized 39.1 MT of marijuana, 1.3 kg of opium gum, and 27.6 kg of heroin. According to the President's 2023 Monthly Security Reports, in the first seven months of 2023 Mexico seized 59 MT of cocaine, 141.6 MT of methamphetamine, 1.7 MT of fentanyl, and dismantled 658 clandestine laboratories, all significant increases from the previous period in 2022. Mexican authorities reportedly seized and dismantled 1,788 clandestine laboratories from the beginning of the Lopez Obrador administration in 2018 through the end of July 2023, according to the President's official reporting.

U.S.-donated canines assisted in significant seizures of illicit drugs in 2023, particularly fentanyl and its precursors. In the first nine months of 2023, U.S.-donated canines in Mexico assisted in the seizure of 1,698.8 kg of methamphetamine, 6,259 methamphetamine pills, \$826,026 in currency, and 244 illicit firearms. Fentanyl pill seizures substantially increased in 2023: from January to September 2023, U.S.-donated canines assisted in the seizures of 2,937,218 fentanyl pills (up 3,682 percent from the first nine months of 2022), and 30.32 kg of fentanyl powder (down 75 percent). The vast majority of clandestine lab seizures have taken place in the Pacific coast state of Sinaloa; however, an outsourcing production model and fragmented supply chains for illicit production minimize the impact of individual seizures.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

Mexico has not collected national drug use or addiction statistics since 2016. In June 2023, the Mexican government announced a new national survey to assess

trends in addiction and mental health to provide insights into drug use statistics. The nationwide results are expected to be available in June 2024.

In the absence of official statistics, government health network data on addiction treatment shows a sustained trend toward amphetamines. In 2022, 46 percent of patients seeking addiction treatment at government health networks sought treatment for amphetamines addiction, up from only 15 percent in 2017. To address growing drug consumption among Mexico's younger populations, the Mexican government launched an anti-drug and health awareness campaign targeting school age populations. In October 2023, Mexico launched the first phase of a binational public awareness campaign on the dangers of drug addiction including with fentanyl, in collaboration with the U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). This effort derived from the work carried out by the Binational Panel of Experts on Substance Addiction created in February 2022 under the U.S.-Mexico Bicentennial Framework for Security, Public Health, and Safe Communities. The campaign includes printed educational materials for distribution among Spanish-speaking populations in the United States through the Mexican government's consular network.

U.S. counterdrug support to Mexico includes reducing drug demand through public health and awareness programs. With U.S. support, the Mexican Social Security Institute released online modules to train and certify counselors, public health officials, first responders, and psychologists to identify and treat substance abuse. U.S. assistance has helped six Mexican states adopt alternative justice models redirecting low-level drug offenders from overcrowded prisons and into rehabilitation programs. Nine more states plan to adopt alternative treatment models in courts in 2024. It also supports the prevention-focused civic justice system, which directs low-level offenders towards services and treatment including for substance use disorders, as necessary.

4. Corruption

The Mexican government does not, as a matter of government policy, encourage or facilitate illicit drug production or distribution, nor is it involved in laundering the proceeds of the sale of illicit drugs. Widespread corruption, however, continues to

impede drug control efforts in Mexico despite legislative and political actions to increase transparency and address impunity. Several high-ranking public officials have faced corruption-related charges since 2022, including former Secretary of Public Security Genaro Garcia Luna, who a U.S. federal court found guilty in February 2023 of taking bribes from TCOs. He awaits sentencing and could face up to life in prison. In August 2022 Mexican authorities arrested former Prosecutor General Jesus Murillo Karam for mishandling the investigation of 43 disappeared university students in 2014, subsequently adding corruption and money-laundering charges in November 2022 for millions in undeclared income – likely linked to drug-related organized crime.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

Established in 2021, the U.S.-Mexico Bicentennial Framework enters its third year as the guide for bilateral security cooperation. U.S. support through the Framework includes training and equipping for Mexican security and justice sector officials on drug seizures, investigations, and prosecutions focused on dismantling the transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) driving drug production and trafficking to the United States.

Officials from both countries convened at the 2023 High-Level Security Dialogue in Mexico City to advance cooperative efforts to combat illicit drug trafficking, particularly synthetic drugs such as fentanyl and their chemical precursors; the trafficking of illicit firearms; human trafficking and smuggling; transnational organized criminal groups; and to reinforce citizen security and public health. In April and July 2023, a senior-level Trilateral Fentanyl Committee convened to guide priority actions to address the illicit fentanyl threat facing North America. During the June 2023 NADD public health summit, leaders from the United States, Mexico, and Canada agreed to prioritize sharing opportunities and challenges in the accessibility and distribution of overdose reversal medications and improving data collection in each country on trends in drug use – to identify areas of interest and collaboration.

In November 2023, the NADD convened, including with the Netherlands, to review and discuss trends in drug trafficking including synthetic drugs like fentanyl, precursors, illicit finance, and public health harms associated with illegal drug use and overdoses. Mexico also joined more than 122 countries in the U.S.-led Global Coalition to Address

Synthetic Drug Threats to coordinate approaches to address illicit drug manufacturing, trafficking, and financing. Mexico co-chairs the Coalition's Public Health Working Group.

D. Conclusion

Drug production and trafficking from Mexico to the United States continues to foment crime and violence on both sides of the border. The United States will continue to partner with Mexico under the Bicentennial Framework to strengthen bilateral cooperation to address narcotics production and trafficking – including through a joint synthetic drug action plan to improve regulatory coordination, information sharing, and training to reduce fentanyl production and precursor chemical diversion. This Framework, based on mutual trust and respect for the sovereignty and independence of each nation, guides our cooperation in the face of common challenges. The Bicentennial Framework recognizes that many of the threats both countries face today are multi-dimensional and cannot be overcome by either country on its own. Together, the two countries will intensify efforts across multiple high-level platforms and expand engagement with the private sector and other key countries to deter and detect the diversion of illicit precursor chemicals used in the manufacture of dangerous narcotics in Mexico. The United States will further efforts to increase security and justice sector efficacy to prosecute transnational crime, reduce impunity, and stem arms trafficking, which fuels widespread violence.

The United States and Mexico understand the imperative to disrupt transnational criminal organizations which traffic arms and illicit drugs or smuggle humans, profiting from the desperation of people driven from their homes by crime, violence, and instability. The two countries are jointly addressing these challenges by implementing solutions that reflect our shared values, including respect for the rule of law, protection and defense of human rights, intolerance of corruption, and zero impunity.

Morocco

Morocco is one of the world's leading hashish producing countries. Moroccan hashish is sent to markets all over the world, including Europe, South America (especially Brazil), the Middle East, and other parts of Africa. Morocco is undertaking a normalization process in an attempt to convert illegal cannabis/hashish production into licit, legitimate production for medicinal, cosmetic, and industrial purposes. One goal of the normalization is to enhance the lives of the historically poor and under-represented communities in the Rif region in the north. Morocco has begun the licensing and regulation of its first legal cannabis production organizations. However, the majority of cannabis grown is intended for the production of illicit hashish.

Seizures of illicit drugs in neighboring countries such as Algeria and Spain remain high. Noting that all statistics in this report are derived from open-source reporting, from January through September 2023 Spain seized approximately 133.37 metric tons (MT) of hashish and Algeria seized 19.36 MT. During the same time period in 2023, Morocco was largely outpaced in seizures by Spain, with approximately 59.4 MT of hashish seized, as well as 2,311 cannabis plants.

Psychotropic pills remain a problem in Morocco, as Rivotril and MDMA (ecstasy) continue to enter Morocco from Europe, including through the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. Historically, seizures were made at Moroccan ports from Belgian and Dutch couriers. However, Spanish couriers have been more recently involved in pill smuggling. The availability and ease of use of pills are attractive to young Moroccans and remain highly used. Through September 2023, approximately 97,806 Rivotril pills, 179,743 MDMA tablets and 232,672 other pills were seized.

A disturbing trend has arisen in several Moroccan cities with the use of cocaine. Called "Lboufa," and very similar to crack cocaine, the drug has become popular among Moroccan youth and has an extremely high rate of addiction. Five kilograms of the drug were seized in August and September 2023. User amounts of the drug are more expensive than other, more commonly used drugs and thus are used by the wealthier population.

Morocco remains an important partner to the United States and the European Union in the fight against drug trafficking and associated drug trafficking networks. Moroccan law

enforcement and customs agencies regularly work with foreign partners to share intelligence and interdict narcotics transiting through Moroccan waters and ports. Moroccan authorities also are quick to identify new trends in trafficking and cater their social and law enforcement efforts to combat the abuse of narcotics, specifically synthetic narcotics.

Morocco has a bilateral mutual legal assistance treaty with the United States, but does not have a bilateral extradition treaty with the United States. Morocco is a party to several multilateral law enforcement conventions that also permit mutual legal assistance with the United States.

Mozambique

Mozambique is not a significant producer of illicit drugs or precursor chemicals, but is a key transit country for drugs trafficked from Afghanistan and Iran. Vulnerabilities to traffickers include an infrequently patrolled 1,600-mile coastline, weak law enforcement, corruption, and porous borders. Traffickers from South Asia transport opiates and methamphetamine in motorized dhows to the Mozambican coast, then offload them to fishing vessels going to the mainland and repackage them for transport to African and European markets. Drug traffickers exchange drugs for illicit goods such as illegally obtained wildlife products, gemstones, and exotic timber, which they ship to Asia. Cannabis is the primary drug produced locally, and consumption rates are high, especially among youth and in poorer regions.

Through a Trilateral Planning Cell (TPC) established in 2019, Mozambique, South Africa, and Tanzania continued to work jointly to counter maritime trafficking of heroin and share information on major drug investigations and seizures with support from the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

In 2023, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and Mozambique continued long-term, ongoing investigations through a vetted unit established in 2022 to combat large-scale drug trafficking organizations. The official Memorandum of Understanding with the vetted unit was dissolved in July 2023; however, the DEA continues a close relationship with this unit of the National Criminal Investigation Service (SERNIC). The DEA conducted training courses for the vetted unit, SERNIC, Central Office for Combating Organized and Transnational Crime (GCCCOT), and the National Immigration Service on topics such as airport interdiction, intelligence collection and analysis, undercover surveillance, and information handling. The United States also trained members of SERNIC and Mozambique's Prosecutor General's Office in border interdiction, undercover operations, and conspiracy investigations.

In February 2023, SERNIC investigators conducted a successful airport interdiction on an Angolan national travelling from Brazil to Mozambique, discovering 8.5 kilograms of cocaine concealed inside packages of coffee beans. In June 2023, the Mozambique Republic Police (PGR) and SERNIC uncovered a methamphetamine laboratory at a warehouse in the process of being set up in Marracuene District. While it was not yet operational, the

processing hardware was being fabricated. Two Mexican nationals with ties to the Sinaloa Cartel, a Colombian national, and a Nigerian national were found in the warehouse.

The United States continued to provide maritime training and support to improve the capacity of the Mozambican Navy and improve port security, including through programs under the Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability.

The United States has neither a bilateral mutual legal assistance treaty nor an extradition treaty with Mozambique. Some mutual legal assistance requests are processed under multilateral conventions that enable such cooperation.

The Netherlands

The Kingdom of the Netherlands holds a significant position in the European and global illicit narcotics industry, due in large part to its leading financial, digital, and maritime infrastructure. It is a major transit hub for illicit substances, especially cocaine from South and Central America and methamphetamine from Mexico, though investigative cooperation with law enforcement counterparts in Belgium throughout 2023 reduced the amount of Netherlands-bound drug shipments clearing customs in Antwerp.

In 2022, the most recent period for which data is available, the Hit and Run Cargo team (HARC) Rotterdam, a task force comprised of Dutch Customs, the Fiscal Information and Investigation Service (FIOD), the Seaport Police, and the Public Prosecution Service in Rotterdam, intercepted a total of 46.79 metric tons (MT) of cocaine in the port of Rotterdam, significantly less than the 72 MT of cocaine authorities seized in 2021. Officials seized an additional 4.12 MT in the port of Vlissingen, almost doubling the 2021 total of 2.1 MT. According to HARC Rotterdam, the total street value of the cocaine seized in 2022 was \$3.69 billion. Figures for 2023 will not be released until early 2024.

In 2023, the government invested an additional \$24.7 million to address drug trafficking through ports, transport companies, and Schiphol airport. The funding focuses on access control, camera surveillance networks, and staff screening. Additionally, the government of the City of Rotterdam is prioritizing public-private partnerships with shipping companies to improve joint efforts to tackle crime.

The Netherlands has made transregional cooperation a priority, especially with Latin American and Caribbean countries and within the European Union. The Ministry of Justice and Security is working towards a bilateral extradition agreement and a mutual legal assistance treaty with Colombia. The Netherlands also holds observer status in the North American Drug Dialogue and as such, hosted a training at the Port of Rotterdam in August. Former Foreign Minister Wopke Hoekstra participated in the virtual ministerial to launch the Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drugs and the Netherlands remains an active participant in all three working groups.

Criminal enterprises in the Netherlands use digital infrastructure, online technology, and domestic production facilities. While the Netherlands lacks legislation criminalizing the

online sale and distribution of most novel psychoactive substances (NPS), new regulations in a NPS law will address some of these deficiencies. The new law was anticipated to pass in 2022, but with the current caretaker status of the government, will not be addressed until 2024.

The National Police of the Netherlands (NPN) and port police cooperate closely with U.S. authorities to exchange information and conduct joint operations. The United States provided container-level intelligence contributing to dozens of seizures of cocaine. The Dutch High Tech Crime Unit remains a close partner for U.S. law enforcement authorities. The United States and the Netherlands have fully operational extradition and mutual legal assistance treaties.

Nicaragua

A. Introduction

Nicaragua's lack of dedicated security resources and central geographic position make it a major transit country for illegal drugs moving towards the United States.

Transnational criminal organizations exploit Nicaragua's long, under-surveilled coastlines and leverage high levels of corruption to transport people and contraband. Criminal organizations smuggle drugs via land routes along the Pacific over border crossings starting on the southern border with Costa Rica and moving north towards Honduras and El Salvador. Off the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua, drugs are smuggled via maritime routes along Colombia's San Andres Island and through Nicaragua's Cayo Perlas and Cayos Miskitos, where load sizes range between 50 to 100 kilograms (kg).

Collaboration and information sharing have continued to diminish, resulting in fewer reported drug and cash seizures than previous years. However, there is no indication that smuggling methods have changed or narcotrafficking levels have decreased. A lack of adequate security resources to conduct land and maritime drug operations will continue to hamper Nicaragua's capacity to improve interdiction. International isolation has resulted in minimal security assistance, which will continue to degrade Nicaraguan capabilities.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

Under Nicaraguan law, the Nicaraguan National Police (NNP) and the Nicaraguan military are the primary institutions responsible for combatting drug trafficking. The size and scope of the Nicaraguan security force have increased dramatically over the last 15 years. The increase in security forces has not resulted in more efficient operations against drug trafficking, however, because drug interdiction is not a top NNP or military priority.

Nicaragua touts its strong bilateral relations with China and Russia. Nicaraguan security forces have reportedly received training in combatting drug trafficking

through Russia's training center in Managua. However, in recent years neither Russia nor China have provided significant assistance in the form of equipment, vehicles, or boats to improve Nicaragua's interdiction capacity. The United States provided the most significant donations prior to 2018, the utility of which is steadily declining as donated equipment ages and breaks down. Despite increases in NNP and Nicaraguan military personnel and their dedicated budgets, there are no indications those increases are being used to improve institutional capacity. Nicaragua has prioritized using security resources for political repression of opposition groups and those critical of the state and its policies, limiting its effectiveness in countering drug trafficking.

Nicaraguan cooperation with U.S. law enforcement remains limited. No bilateral mutual legal assistance treaty exists between the United States and Nicaragua, though both countries are parties to the Inter-American Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters. The United States and Nicaragua are parties to a bilateral extradition treaty, but the Nicaraguan constitution bars the extradition of Nicaraguan nationals, including dual nationals. Nicaragua generally requires a Red Notice from INTERPOL for wanted individuals before cooperating with the United States in expelling non-Nicaraguan citizen fugitives or assuming domestic jurisdiction in cases against Nicaraguan citizens. Despite policy restrictions on bilateral cooperation, the NNP continue to provide timely responses to requests for security assistance related to U.S. Embassy operations and some coordination on criminal investigations and narcotics and currency trafficking interdiction.

2. Supply Reduction

Nicaragua has been reluctant to share information regarding drug and cash interdictions. According to local media reports, cocaine and cash seizures dropped significantly in 2023. In the first nine months of 2023, Nicaragua reportedly seized 1.43 metric tons (MT) of cocaine, a sharp decrease from the 3.56 MT seized in the first eight months of 2022. Cash seizures also dropped from \$8.1 million in 2022 to \$1.5 million in 2023. Nicaragua's largest cash seizure of \$3.4 million was carried out by the NNP on the southern Caribbean coast. However, as in recent years, Nicaragua did not report detaining any individuals during this large operation. In

August 2023, the NNP seized 0.24 MT of fentanyl at the northern border crossing with Honduras.

In addition, Nicaragua seized 0.77 MT of marijuana in 2023, down from the 1.12 MT seized in 2022. Nicaraguan authorities also reportedly destroyed 23,534 marijuana plants. The seizure and destruction of marijuana plants has fluctuated in recent years, with only 428 plants destroyed in 2022 and 15,380 destroyed in 2021.

There is no public information regarding the manufacture, production, transshipment, or trafficking of synthetic drugs.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

There is a lack of available data on drug usage in Nicaragua, which limits capacity to measure the impact of prevention and treatment programs.

The Nicaraguan Institute Against Alcoholism and Drug Addiction under the Ministry of Health (MINSA) is responsible for the study, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of individuals suffering from substance use disorder. MINSA, the NNP, and youth outreach programs routinely support drug prevention awareness campaigns including an ongoing campaign, “My life without drugs.”

The government can provide very limited services to persons suffering from substance use disorder. There are a few private rehabilitation centers in Nicaragua, but they are too costly for most Nicaraguans. The government has forcibly closed 3,500 civil society organizations since 2018, including many that worked with vulnerable youth suffering from drug use. As a result, drug users have fewer support options.

4. Corruption

As a matter of policy, the Government of Nicaragua does not encourage or facilitate illicit drug production or distribution, nor is it involved in laundering the proceeds of the sale of illicit drugs. However, Nicaragua has prioritized pursuing political opponents over enforcing its laws to investigate officials accused of corruption and illicit activities. Over the last six years, the United States has sanctioned 96

Nicaraguan officials and 12 entities for their role in illicit activities including corruption and human rights abuses. Furthermore, the United States has imposed visa restrictions on more than 1,000 Nicaraguans for supporting corruption and undermining democratic institutions.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

As U.S. foreign assistance to Nicaragua has decreased in response to deteriorating political and human rights conditions, Nicaragua has been less inclined to participate in joint, proactive investigations, like those routinely conducted with other foreign counterparts in Central and South America. The United States continues to support programs which benefit the Nicaraguan people. A bilateral agreement remains in place to suppress illicit traffic by sea, which includes provisions addressing ship boarding, ship riders, pursuit, entry into territorial waters, overflight, orders to land, and international maritime interdiction support.

D. Conclusion

In 2023, Nicaragua's authoritarian government failed to combat drug trafficking and prosecute corrupt officials. The ruling Sandinista National Liberation Front has worked to supplant Nicaragua's democratic institutions, twist the rule of law to their benefit, and quash independent thought, media, and civil society. Regime officials continued to demonstrate a lack of will to address pervasive corruption, criminality, and drug trafficking.

Nigeria

A. Introduction

Nigeria is a significant source country for cannabis cultivation and methamphetamine production. Law enforcement seizures of record-breaking quantities of cocaine and opioids in the first nine months of 2023, especially tramadol and captagon (fenethylline), demonstrated that Nigeria continues to be a major hub for transnational drug trafficking networks. In the first nine months of 2023, counterdrug units of Nigerian law enforcement reported seizures and controlled, undercover purchases of fentanyl from street-level distributors. Nigerian drug trafficking organizations are entrenched throughout the world and are active in supplying cocaine to Asia and Europe, heroin to Europe and North America, and methamphetamine to South Africa, Southeast Asia, Australia, and New Zealand.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) is Nigeria's dedicated counternarcotic agency. Although inconsistent federal funding has historically hampered NDLEA's mission, effective senior leadership and international cooperation has improved interdictions and law enforcement capacity. Current NDLEA Chairman Brigadier General Mohamed Buba Marwa was appointed in 2021 under the previous presidential administration.

NDLEA is in its third year of implementing the National Drug Control Master Plan (NDCMP) for 2021-25, which placed a larger emphasis on recruitment, equipment procurement, and personnel development. Strengthening recruitment and retention efforts from previous years, during this reporting period, the NDLEA hired and trained 5,000 new officers and strengthened performance incentives by clearing promotion backlogs. The NDLEA also constructed new barracks, additional forensic laboratories, and acquired a new aerial view surveillance vehicle. NDLEA has strengthened remuneration and employee welfare, including a new salary structure, insurance benefits to families of deceased officers and to those injured; severance

package for officers; and has increased local and international trainings. These efforts have attracted better qualified candidates, retained experience officers, and helped mitigate corruption within the police force.

2. Supply Reduction

NDLEA's measures to enhance security at seaports, airports, land borders, and other operational areas led to successful arrests of mid- and high-level drug traffickers. In total, NDLEA apprehended 8,561 drug traffickers and seized 888.7 metric tons (MT) of drugs between January and October 2023. The seized drugs included cannabis (704.4 MT); cocaine (165 kilograms (kg)); heroin (32 kg); methamphetamine (1.26 MT); tramadol (28.3 MT); rohypnol (306 kg); codeine (57.26 MT); diazepam (1.99 MT); and other drugs (95 MT). In addition to drug seizures, the NDLEA also seized \$269,000 of counterfeit U.S. dollars.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

In line with the NDCMP, the NDLEA focused on increasing interdiction capacity while addressing drug demand reduction. Under the "War Against Drug Abuse" (WADA) initiative, NDLEA continues to implement evidence-based interventions and programs across Nigeria to include training with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs) and government staff. NDLEA has also expanded existing trainings, such as the Drug Prevention Treatment and Care (DPTC) training. NDLEA reports that calls to its 24/7 toll-free helpline providing public counselling and teletherapy services continues to increase in volume. The line is monitored by personnel speaking at least five different languages common to Nigeria to reinforce drug supply and demand reduction efforts. In the first nine months of 2023, 919 clients were treated and rehabilitated in NDLEA facilities across the country, while 5,325 persons arrested during enforcement operations were offered brief intervention and referral services before release. To inform youth about the dangers of drug trafficking and substance abuse, NDLEA is also actively engaged on social media.

4. Corruption

Nigeria does not, as a matter of government policy, encourage or facilitate illicit drug production or distribution, nor is it involved in laundering the proceeds of the sale of illicit drugs. However, Nigeria does not consistently enforce its laws to investigate corruption allegations. The lack of adequate programs to ensure the welfare of personnel and adequate remuneration induces officers to receive bribes.

Nonetheless, NDLEA has shown some willingness to prosecute officers for corruption. This reporting period, at least one NDLEA officer accused of corruption was fired from the agency. The NDLEA reported that its Directorate of Internal Affairs and Provost Marshall handled disciplinary “work ethic” cases. In addition to the Directorate of Internal Affairs, the Special Monitoring Unit worked to ensure compliance with standard operating procedures on reporting drug seizures, arrests, care and custody of evidence, and prosecution of suspected drug traffickers.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiative

The United States provides assistance to the NDLEA and other law enforcement agencies combatting drug trafficking, including training, mentoring, adoption of standardized procedures, equipment, and rehabilitation of spaces to increase capabilities for drug interdiction, investigations, and eventual prosecutions of drug-related crimes. This includes support to the Sensitive Investigative Unit (SIU) within NDLEA. In addition to the SIU, the United States sustains a counternarcotics advisor position in Lagos to work with NDLEA. In 2023, the United States continued to invest in training and equipment to enhance NDLEA’s ability to investigate and impede drug trafficking. U.S.-supported trainings included combating organized crime and corruption, regional investigative and analytical case training, criminal enterprise theory, methamphetamine clandestine laboratory training, and crypto currency concepts. The United States also provided equipment, such as scanners and density meters, to advance drug detention at major drug trafficking points. To address the increasing synthetic opioids crisis, the United States focused training on the safe handling of synthetic opioids including field testing kits and personal protective equipment. The United States also supported the ongoing rehabilitation of an NDLEA forensics laboratory in Lagos. Other U.S.-supported efforts included work with Nigerian government officials to look at alternatives to incarceration for minor drug offenders and

supporting civil society and health practitioners working to reduce drug demand and provide treatment for substance use.

NDLEA has continued its collaboration with international partners, including the United Kingdom, Brazil, South Africa, and India. NDLEA hosted the 31st Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa in September 2023. An extradition treaty is in force between Nigeria and the United States, as well as a bilateral mutual legal assistance treaty, which facilitates formal cooperation in drug trafficking investigations and prosecutions.

D. Conclusion

Nigeria is a major source, transit hub, and destination market for drugs, notably cocaine, opium, marijuana, and now synthetic drugs. Senior leadership has driven important change in NDLEA leading to organizational reform and increased operational successes by the NDLEA and other Nigerian authorities, including the doubling of officers. The Nigerian government should continue to provide increased resources to NDLEA to ensure the sustainability of this success and to address drug use in the country. A trend to more proactive and intelligence-driven investigations is yielding better results and enhancing the NDLEA officer corps' professionalism. Additional investment by the government in modern investigative tools and trainings is required. The government should continue to improve welfare for officers and address other underlying causes of corruption, and strengthen intelligence-led investigations, prosecutions, and sanctions of individual drug traffickers and sophisticated networks. The government should also increase its efforts to develop alternatives to incarceration for minor drug offenders and reduce drug demand through treatment services.

Pakistan

A. Introduction

Given its geographic location and relatively porous borders, Pakistan is centered on one of the most significant drug trafficking corridors in the world. Regional instability has further spurred the flourishing drug trade. The United States has partnered with Pakistan for more than 40 years in the fight against illicit drug trafficking.

The government of Pakistan is presently facing myriad challenges, including a dramatic spike in violent extremist incidents, growing instability in neighboring Afghanistan, and an ever-developing network of drug trafficking routes. An estimated 40 percent of all Afghan opiates continue to transit through Pakistan. While overland transit corridors link Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and India, assessments conclude that mass quantities of drugs transit more freely via Pakistan's maritime domain.

A U.S.-contracted survey concluded in October 2023 estimated that there are approximately 1800 hectares of opium poppy under cultivation in Pakistan.

The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), the primary drug enforcement agency in Pakistan, has reported a significant increase in the flow of synthetic drugs through Pakistan. This surge includes precursors arriving from China and India enroute to Afghanistan, along with the final products – namely methamphetamine – transiting back through Pakistan and ultimately to global markets via ocean transport. Pakistan continues to have persistently high levels of Afghan-produced opium and heroin transiting the country as well, with heroin seizures rising significantly this year. In recent years, drug traffickers have also moved drugs, mostly heroin, into India via drones over the Punjab and Kashmir borders. Pakistani government officials publicly commit to drug interdiction efforts, but the ANF competes for limited resources with other federal and provincial agencies charged with drug enforcement duties.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

Pakistan has addressed the issue of illicit drugs and related crimes through a series of legislative measures and initiatives over the years. These efforts aim to combat drug trafficking, drug abuse, and associated criminal activities. A 2022 amendment to the 1997 Control of Narcotics Substances Act (CNSA) has provided Pakistan with a legal framework to better respond to the evolving nature of the drug trade by defining incarceration periods for drug traffickers based on type and quantity of drugs seized.

In connection with the CNSA, the 1997 Anti-Narcotics Force Act enables ANF to manage narcotics-related matters at the federal level with substantive, procedural, and administrative guidelines. The 18th amendment to Pakistan's constitution, passed in 2010, complements the federal narcotics oversight. In theory, this legislation grants specific counterdrug authorities to provincial governments to promote a more localized approach in combatting illicit drugs. In practice, however, friction exists due to the blurred jurisdictional division and struggle for limited resources between the federal and provincial levels.

ANF constitutes less than half of one percent of Pakistan's total law enforcement personnel. Other law enforcement agencies generally lack comprehensive drug interdiction training and often do not prioritize countering narcotics. ANF's capacity for conducting complex drug investigations is also limited. Through 2023, the United States has continued to support the ANF's Special Investigative Cell (ANF/SIC), a unit vetted by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

While the United States and Pakistan do not have a bilateral treaty on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters, the 1931 Extradition Treaty between the United States and the United Kingdom was continued in force with Pakistan following Pakistan's independence. Pakistan also participates in several multilateral law enforcement conventions which provide a framework for cooperation in criminal matters and aid U.S.-Pakistan collaboration.

2. Supply Reduction

Drug production in Pakistan has long predominantly revolved around opium poppy cultivation. Pakistan's opium poppy cultivation dropped to near-zero levels in 2000, down from approximately 32,000 hectares (ha) in 1978. It jumped to 6,703 ha in 2003 and fluctuated before falling to approximately 1,400 ha in 2016. The significant decrease in opium poppy cultivation in neighboring Afghanistan, resulting from the Taliban's 2022 cultivation ban, has created a risk that cultivation in Pakistan will increase. A U.S.-contracted survey – concluded in October 2023 – provided an updated estimate of approximately 1800 hectares of opium poppy currently under cultivation. Since 1982, the United States has allocated more than \$84.9 million to support rural development programs encouraging alternative livelihoods to poppy cultivation.

Most drugs trafficked through Pakistan are destined for global markets, and Pakistani law enforcement agencies are only able to intercept a small fraction of this illicit trade. From July 2022 to June 2023, Pakistan's law enforcement agencies reported drug seizures at the national level to include 2.27 metric tons (MT) of morphine, 15.6 MT of heroin, 56.5 MT of opium, 10.4 kilograms of cocaine, and 164.8 MT of hashish. Pakistani agencies reported no fentanyl seizures, 5.8 MT of seized methamphetamine, and 1.79 MT of amphetamine. Notable trends in comparison to the July 2021 to June 2022 period include a 212 percent increase in opium seizures, a 116 percent increase in methamphetamine seizures, and a 90% increase in heroin seizures. These upticks are likely due to a combination of increased drug trafficking and the increased capacity of Pakistani drug enforcement agencies.

Over the twelve-month period from July 2022 to June 2023, Pakistan recorded roughly 84,000 drug-related arrests, predominantly involving low-level drug dealers. ANF disrupted 14 drug trafficking organizations. During these operations, ANF arrested 48 individuals and seized \$810,000 worth of assets. Additionally, ANF participated in 19 international intelligence-driven operations, seizing nearly 24 MT of illicit drugs. ANF reported a conviction rate of 78 percent in drug trafficking cases during this period. Despite the presence of conspiracy laws, authorities have rarely

employed them successfully to prosecute leaders of criminal drug trafficking organizations.

DEA reports continued cooperation with ANF/SIC. From October 2022 to September 2023, DEA has documented more than \$176 million in assets denied and drugs seized. DEA's coordination with ANF/SIC resulted in the seizures of over 42 MT of hashish, 10 MT of opium, 3.2 MT of heroin, and 4.45 MT of methamphetamine. These figures eclipsed the value of most DEA offices in the Middle East region.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) conducted a national drug use survey in 2012 which revealed that 6.7 million Pakistanis had used drugs (exclusive of alcohol and tobacco) in the preceding year. A 2021 study determined over four million Pakistanis suffer from drug dependency. The United States is funding an updated Pakistan national drug use survey to identify trends and specific populations affected by the pervasive reality of drugs in Pakistani society, which will conclude in June 2024.

The Pakistani government has designated ANF as the lead agency in providing drug rehabilitation care and services. A significant lack of resources limits ANF's effectiveness in this effort. From July 2022 to June 2023, ANF's drug demand reduction unit provided no-cost treatment to over 2,000 patients through six drug addiction treatment and rehabilitation centers in the cities of Karachi, Islamabad, Sukkur, and Hyderabad. ANF's limited capacity leaves millions of Pakistanis without the hope of receiving the necessary care to break free from their drug dependence.

4. Corruption

Pakistan is a signatory to multilateral treaties on transnational organized crimes, including those related to drug trafficking and corruption. As a matter of government policy, Pakistan does not encourage or facilitate illegal activity associated with drug trafficking, and there is no evidence that any senior government officials are engaged in such activity. While there is no direct evidence of the government of Pakistan's facilitation of illicit drug production or distribution, corruption remains a concern across all levels of government. The National Accountability Bureau (NAB)

is the government of Pakistan entity tasked with rooting out corruption. Since its establishment in 1999, NAB regulations have undergone several changes, raising questions as to the consistency and legitimacy of Pakistan's approach to corruption.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

The United States has undertaken a comprehensive set of data-driven initiatives to counter drug trafficking and reduce drug demand in Pakistan. As of 2023, the United States has provided targeted assistance to Pakistani agencies with counternarcotics mandates to include the ANF, Pakistan Customs, Coast Guards, Airport Security Force, the Ministry of Narcotics Control, and the Excise, Taxation, and Narcotics Control Agencies of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, and Balochistan provinces. Highlighting the impact of these efforts, the ANF reports that 90 percent of their 2023 drug seizures relied on U.S.-funded equipment, training, and/or infrastructure.

In response to Pakistan's desire to improve interagency coordination, the U.S. government is funding the establishment of a dedicated counternarcotics fusion center. This facility, housed at the ANF headquarters, will facilitate information sharing among Pakistani law enforcement agencies, ensure ample dissemination of time-sensitive data, allow for intelligence analysis, and improve the efficiency of joint planning and execution of drug interdiction operations.

D. Conclusion

Pakistan remains vulnerable as a transit corridor for illicit drugs transiting through its overland and maritime routes to global markets. The prevalence of synthetic drugs is on the rise. U.S. law enforcement agencies assess that various precursors for illicit drug production are liberally transiting through Pakistan's ports. All relevant agencies, namely the Coast Guards and Pakistan Maritime Security Agency, should actively participate in the counternarcotics fusion center as this participation is critical to the joint success and improved effectiveness as Pakistan combats the illicit drug trade in a coordinated manner.

Panama

A. Introduction

Panama is an important and capable U.S. partner in combatting illicit drug trafficking, with a high interdiction response rate and a solid track record of successful trafficker prosecutions. Panama exceeded 100 metric tons (MT) in drug seizures before the end of the year in 2023 for the third time, as it did in 2021 with 145 MT seized, and again in 2022 with 138 MT seized.

Panama is not a major consumer or producer of illicit drugs, but with over 1,500 miles of coastline with nearly 500 rivers, the Panama Canal, and proximity to Colombia the country is a prime sea and land passage for drugs, primarily cocaine, flowing from South America to North America and Europe. As much as 40 percent of northward-bound cocaine produced in neighboring Colombia passes through Panama's exclusive economic zone (EEZ), which drug trafficking organization (DTO)s and their associates transport, mainly in non-commercial go-fast vessels, from both the Pacific and Caribbean coasts. Less than five percent of Colombian cocaine flows overland across the border due to the dense Darien jungle and lack of roads. Drug traffickers also take advantage of millions of shipping containers passing through the Panama Canal or transshipping the isthmus each year to smuggle drugs to North America and Europe.

In 2023, Panama seized near record amounts of narcotics, due to the continued success of operations in the maritime environment by the National Air and Naval Service (SENAN), container seizures by the U.S.-mentored Port Task Force (PTF), and ongoing inter-service collaboration through the U.S.-supported Joint Regional Air and Navy Operations Center (CROAN).

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

Panamanian President Laurentino "Nito" Cortizo's administration continued to focus on fighting narcotrafficking. Because Panama has no standing military, the Ministry of Public Security (MINSEG) oversees counternarcotics efforts through its three

principal law enforcement agencies: SENAN, the National Border Service (SENAFRONT), and the Panamanian National Police (PNP).

MINSEG continued to improve the CROAN, including by enhancing cross-service interoperability through curriculum standardization and training under a Joint Maritime Force (JMF) concept intended to increase efficiency and safety for maritime operations. U.S. law enforcement agencies cooperate with PNP, SENAN, and SENAFRONT in support of Panama's counternarcotics missions. SENAN and the United States also collaborate operationally on maritime interdictions under the 2002 Salas-Becker Agreement. The law enforcement cooperation relationship between the United States and Panama is strong. Under applicable treaties, Panama provides mutual legal assistance and extradites fugitives.

2. Supply Reduction

In the first ten months of 2023, Panamanian authorities seized over 100 MT of narcotics. Cocaine seizures comprised approximately 75 percent of all seizures while the remainder were marijuana seizures. SENAN conducted the majority of Panamanian narcotics seizures, approximately 65 percent, due to its maritime mission and asset capabilities, followed by the PNP (30 percent) which operates across multiple environments, and SENAFRONT (five percent) which is primarily tasked with border security. SENAN seized 85 percent of marijuana entering Panama in the period, due primarily to a significant flow of marijuana from Colombia to Costa Rica that crosses Panama's EEZ.

Vessels transfer more than four million containers among themselves (transshipments) at Panamanian ports each year, a process that exposes containers to drug smuggling. The PTF seized over 18MT of cocaine in the first nine months of 2023. Between 2021-2022, Panama seized over 70MT of cocaine from containerized cargo and the port system.

Due to Panama's geographic position and sustained, high levels of illicit drug production in Colombia, where most U.S.-bound cocaine originates, the fact that Panama is not the leading first-stop country for cocaine flowing from Colombia may reflect that Panamanian security forces have been successful in conducting counterdrug operations. Efforts required to maintain successful counterdrug efforts

include continued force modernization so Panama can respond rapidly to traffickers as they adjust their methods, ongoing collaboration with U.S. and regional partners, and sustained detection capability.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

Drug use in Panama is not as common as in other Central and South American countries. According to the Organization of American States 2019 Report on Drug Use in the Americas, its most recent, Panama has the third lowest rate of marijuana consumption and the lowest rate of cocaine consumption of 15 Central and South American countries studied. Panama has not updated its strategy on demand reduction since 2012 and has not conducted a drug demand study since 2015.

The United States supports anti-drug initiatives such as the Drug Awareness and Resistance Education (DARE) and the Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) programs. In 2023, over 13,500 students in DARE and 32,000 students participated in GREAT.

4. Corruption

The government of Panama does not, as a matter of official government policy, encourage or facilitate illicit drug production or distribution, nor is it involved in laundering the proceeds of the sale of illicit drugs. Law enforcement has not identified anyone within the current administration or other senior officials involved in any such activity.

In August 2023, Minister of Security Juan Pino introduced an asset forfeiture bill to the National Assembly for the second time. Debate on this bill continued throughout 2023, though passage is not expected in 2023.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

Panama shares U.S. national security goals, including dismantling transnational criminal organizations. Panama actively partners with U.S. law enforcement agencies and frequently leads the region in interdictions accomplished in coordination with the Joint Interagency Task Force South.

The JMF has fully integrated implementation of the Maritime Interdiction Case Package (a U.S.-supported technique that enables ship boarders to successfully provide drug interdiction evidence to prosecutors) as a standard operating procedure for the presentation of evidence in maritime interdiction operations to their judiciary.

D. Conclusion

Foremost among Panama's priorities should be passing the asset forfeiture law through the National Assembly to deter drug trafficking, money laundering, and corruption, and to sustain future law enforcement activities. Other recommendations include increasing anticorruption efforts to promote the rule of law and transparency; developing a citizen security strategy that expands community policing programs and provides a whole-of-government response to reduce violence in crime-ridden communities by using prevention programs; and budgeting to sustain security-related assets, both national and donated, in order to maintain and increase its capacity to defeat TCOs and deter narcotics trafficking throughout Panama.

Peru

A. Introduction

While Peru experienced significant political unrest in 2023 as a result of the December 2022 impeachment of former president Pedro Castillo, cooperation with the United States on counterdrug efforts remained largely positive. However, the instability led to inconsistencies and delays in implementing counternarcotics policies. Peru continues to face many challenges in controlling illicit drug production and trafficking. It has long been the world's second-largest cultivator of coca and producer of cocaine (after Colombia), with an estimated 95,008 ha under cultivation in 2022 according to Peru's drug policy agency, DEVIDA, in partnership with the UN Office for Drugs and Crime. Peruvian cocaine is trafficked throughout South America for shipment to Europe, East Asia, Mexico, and the United States. Peru is also a major importer of precursor chemicals for cocaine production.

Peruvian law enforcement agencies must adopt a more strategic approach to combat illicit narcotics effectively. This includes conducting comprehensive studies of the criminal market, identifying potential threats, analyzing cocaine supply chain vulnerabilities, and dismantling criminal organizations while freezing their illegal assets. The challenge, however, is that organized crime continues to flourish and adapt in remote areas that lack state presence. The government committed to augment the counternarcotics budget in 2023 by up to \$30 million, \$7 million more than in 2022, and to expand coca eradication efforts to 25,000 hectares.

Peru has a small but growing domestic drug consumption problem, but the Government of Peru has not provided statistical data on drug use within Peru since 2017, impeding efforts to comprehensively assess the extent of drug demand within the country.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

In 2023, Peru implemented new measures to address pressing crime-related challenges, coca cultivation and replanting, and drug trafficking. The government

also strengthened approximately 50 laws addressing counternarcotics, money laundering, environmental crimes, and disposal of precursor chemicals. Through DEVIDA, Peru has designed, implemented, and updated national policies and programs to prevent and decrease illicit cultivation, production, and manufacture of drugs through its 2030 National Anti-drug Policy, which established three objectives: Improve the socioeconomic and institutional status of the strategic areas of intervention, reduce the production and illicit drug trade in strategic areas of intervention, and reduce drug use in vulnerable populations.

On September 15, 2023, Peru and the United States formally established a vetted Sensitive Investigative Unit to assist in transnational criminal investigations. Also in 2023, after two decades, Peru and the United States signed a Non-Lethal Aerial Interception Agreement, strengthening collaboration to combat illicit drug trafficking and organized crime. The agreement is a positive development in security cooperation but as of late October 2023, it has yet to be ratified by the Peruvian Congress.

The United States and Peru have a bilateral extradition treaty that entered into force in 2002. Law enforcement cooperation remains strong, particularly with vetted units. However, Peruvian law enforcement and prosecutors should focus to a greater extent on long term investigations that lead to arrests. Peruvian authorities also lack appropriate widespread identification and detection capabilities in either first responders or chemical and forensic laboratory systems that might detect synthetic drugs or other emerging threats should they emerge in the country.

In coca-producing regions, U.S.-supported alternative development helps small farmers transition to profitable licit endeavors and leverages Peru's resources to bring public services to rural areas. It also provides technical assistance to strengthen DEVIDA as an institution.

2. Supply Reduction

In the first nine months of 2023, Peruvian forces seized 62.14 metric tons (MT) of illegal drugs, including 14.45 MT of cocaine hydrochloride and 18.31 MT of cocaine paste, compared to the 56.48 MT recorded during the corresponding timeframe in

2022. Seizures of marijuana, a growing concern, totaled 19 MT as of October 5, 2023.

Law enforcement seized 16,150 liters of liquid-controlled precursor chemicals and 28.424 MT of solid-controlled precursor chemicals as of October 5, 2023. In the same timeframe, the Peruvian National Police (PNP) apprehended 9,032 individuals for drug-related offenses, up from 7,430 individuals arrested during the same period in 2022.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

DEVIDA implements Peru's "Integral Strategy for the Fight against Drugs," which includes a demand reduction strategy that covers prevention, treatment, social reinsertion, and aftercare.

The most widely used drugs include cocaine, cocaine paste, and marijuana. Peru has a national prevention program that targets critical population sectors, elementary-level students, adults in non-formal community-based programs, and prisoners. However, the system does not include indigenous groups or private-sector workplace prevention programs.

The United States supports drug demand reduction through training programs to provide substance use treatment for women, adolescent girls, and the LGBTQI+ community.

4. Corruption

As a matter of policy, the Government of Peru does not encourage or facilitate the illicit production or distribution of narcotics, psychotropic drugs, or other controlled substances or the laundering of proceeds from illegal drug transactions. However, insufficient resources, weak law enforcement institutions, an ineffective judicial system, and inadequate compensation for civil service employees and public safety officials facilitate corruption throughout all sectors. Peru is a party to the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption but has yet to fully implement its provisions, such as the seizure of property obtained through corruption.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

In January 2023, the United States and Peru convened their inaugural Counternarcotics Working Group meeting to address drug-related challenges. Topics included bolstering law enforcement cooperation, enhancing interdiction efforts, increasing eradication, sharing vital data and best practices, facilitating multilateral coordination, working on strategies for reducing drug demand, and fortifying Peru's leadership role in regional counternarcotics initiatives.

The group addressed topics such as the vulnerabilities of seaports and airports to drug trafficking, the considerable challenge of managing and disposing of 380 metric tons of chemical precursors under the custody of the PNP, and the alarming prospect of a potential shift toward synthetic drugs in the next five years. The United States underscored the urgent need for increased interoperability among counterdrug entities and the Peruvian Armed Force; establishing a clear legal framework and standardized operating procedures to prevent overlap with other institutions emerged as a top priority. In response to these challenges, the United States proposed to serve as an intermediary, facilitating the enhancement of maritime capabilities, law enforcement effectiveness, prosecution efforts, and professional development training.

D. Conclusion

The collaboration between the United States and Peru as a willing partner in combating drug trafficking and transnational crime proved strong in 2023. To bolster border security, Peru should adopt a multifaceted approach, which includes developing comprehensive counternarcotics strategies, establishing multiple task forces within a holistic approach, using specialized investigation techniques, expanding air and sea support, and increasing the application of technology.

Security and counternarcotics cooperation should focus on several key areas. There should be an emphasis on enhancing interdiction operations, particularly in the maritime domain and border regions, to disrupt drug trafficking routes. Peru should reinforce efforts to combat money laundering and corruption to dismantle criminal networks. It is crucial to gradually replace eradication with economically viable crop substitution programs as part of an integrated rural security and development strategy. A public

focus on prosecutions would continue to support rule of law and demonstrate a commitment to Peru's priority on citizen security.

Peruvian cooperation should be expanded to protect environmentally sensitive areas such as national parks, native communities, and the Amazon. Peru should continue to foster efficient communication and develop multifaceted security, intelligence, and counterdrug programs in order to address their cocaine production challenges and prepare themselves for the eventual entry of the clandestine fentanyl trade, as other countries in the region (Chile, Uruguay, and Argentina) have already experienced.

Philippines

A. Introduction

The vast archipelago of the Philippines, with over 7,600 islands, creates numerous opportunities for drug traffickers to exploit the country as both a transit point and a destination for illicit drugs. Law enforcement agencies struggle to allocate adequate resources to combat drug trafficking in a country with over 117 million residents and a complex network of ports and airports, exacerbated by criminal syndicates and corruption within the law enforcement system.

The most frequently seized drugs in the Philippines include methamphetamine hydrochloride (or "shabu," as generally known in the country), cannabis, and methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA, or "ecstasy"). Drugs entering the Philippines are used locally and transported to other countries in Southeast Asia and Oceania. The Philippines is not a significant source or transit country for drugs entering the United States.

Under President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr., the Philippine Government unveiled a new Philippine Development Plan for 2023 to 2028, prioritizing the reduction of drug dependence through community-based treatment, rehabilitation, education, and reintegration. Further, the Philippines' active participation in the Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats demonstrates its willingness to work with international partners in drug demand reduction efforts.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

The Philippines' National Security Policy includes public safety and health on the national security agenda and outlines a whole-of-nation approach to dealing with the complexities of an anti-drug campaign.

As the policy-making agency on drug matters, the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) leads national initiatives against drug use. The DDB drafted the Philippine Anti-Illegal Drug Strategy which serves as the foundation for the government's approach

to addressing illegal drugs. The strategy addresses law enforcement, regulatory compliance, and judicial and legislative measures.

The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) is the law enforcement agency mandated with preventing, investigating, and combating illegal narcotics in the Philippines. With 3,257 employees, PDEA coordinates on drug interdiction work with other law enforcement agencies such as the Philippine National Police, Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), National Bureau of Investigation, Bureau of Customs, and Bureau of Immigration. PDEA works with the Philippine Department of Justice (DOJ) and regional judicial systems to prosecute cases.

The United States and the Philippines have extradition and mutual legal assistance treaties; extradition and mutual legal assistance requests are frequently coordinated. Although bureaucratic procedures can be complex, cooperation is excellent. On transnational drug interdictions and demand reduction, the Philippines continues to cooperate with foreign partners, particularly the United States.

2. Supply Reduction

The Philippines' extensive and porous coastline serves as a point of entry for illicit drugs and substances, posing a serious challenge for law enforcement agencies. Drugs are often transported from a foreign country using larger vessels and picked up upon reaching the Philippines' territorial waters. In some cases, illegal drug trafficking on a smaller scale is conducted through courier companies with transactions completed via online platforms. Drug trafficking organizations have grown significantly by adopting commercial methods of legitimate multinational firms.

PDEA's joint efforts with international and local organizations facilitated the completion of 25,646 anti-drug operations that resulted in the arrest of 35,089 individuals and seizure of 1.7 metric tons (MT) of methamphetamine hydrochloride ("shabu") and 32.67 kilograms (kg) of cocaine during the first nine months of 2023. U.S.-donated equipment and vehicles for the two airport inter-agency drug interdiction task groups provided logistics support for PDEA's interdiction and follow-up operations.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

As an education provider, the DDB actively implemented the Universal Prevention Curriculum with a focus on school guidance counselors and media practitioners during the reporting period. The DDB also engaged in intergovernmental programs to establish policy and regulations. The DDB worked with the Department of Social Welfare and Development to draft the regulations for after-care as a program for drug demand reduction. The DDB funded the construction of drug treatment and rehabilitation centers in priority areas of the country and provided training for community-based drug rehabilitation focal points for effective drug treatment service delivery.

The Department of Health is responsible for ensuring that a public health perspective is incorporated into drug concerns and policy. There are 81 drug abuse treatment and rehabilitation facilities which assist 4,255 patients with substance use disorders. The Department is also implementing community-based drug rehabilitation in 80 cities and municipalities.

As the agency responsible for ensuring access to equity and quality basic education, the Department of Education implements the National Drug Education Program. The Department of Education actively implements training on the Universal Prevention Curriculum across its programs to include student, teacher, and out of school initiatives. Several other Philippine agencies implement local drug demand reduction programs. PDEA developed and implements an advocacy program aimed at drug prevention in the workplace and communities in 73 provinces, cities, and municipalities. The Department of Interior and Local Government continued a multi-sector program aimed at prevention, health promotion, law enforcement, rehabilitation, and reintegration.

4. Corruption

As a matter of government policy, the Philippines does not encourage or facilitate illicit drug production or distribution, nor is it involved in laundering the proceeds of the sale of illicit drugs. The Philippines actively discourages illegal activity associated with drug trafficking. The Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act, formally referred to as Republic Act 9165 (RA 9165), delineates punitive measures applicable

to government officials engaged in illicit drug-related activities. Originally passed in 2002, the House Committee on Dangerous Drugs is in deliberations with pertinent stakeholders to assess the necessity of revising provisions of RA 9165. During the reporting period, the concerted efforts of counternarcotics operations culminated in the apprehension of 32 elected officials, 17 law enforcement personnel, and 117 government employees implicated in unlawful drug-related activities.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

The United States and other international donors continue to strengthen the Philippines' capacity to develop an evidence-based approach to counternarcotics programming. Through bilateral letters of agreements, interagency agreements, and grants, the United States supports national, regional, and grassroot-level training and conferences for prevention and treatment professionals that facilitate multi-sectoral engagement to ensure inclusivity and sustainability. The Philippines is also working on the international accreditation and credentialing of its prevention and treatment workforce through the Philippine Addiction Specialist Society, a local affiliate of the International Society of Substance Use Professionals. A group of alumni from the U.S. Embassy's International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) launched an evidence-informed drug prevention policy that facilitates the participation of student councils and campus organizations in selected cities in the Philippines. In consultation with U.S. interagency partners, Philippine stakeholders plan to implement new initiatives for alternatives to incarceration, gender programming, and after in 2024.

D. Conclusion

The Philippines grapples with a persistent illegal drug market, posing challenges to public safety and health. To address this issue effectively, a coordinated strategy encompassing policy development, drug supply management, and demand reduction is crucial. The forthcoming release of the DDB 2023 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse Patterns and Trends by year-end should inform evidence-based counternarcotics programs, bridging the criminal justice and public health sectors. Philippine agencies such as the DDB, Department of Health, Department of Education, PDEA, and Bureau of Corrections are actively fortifying their comprehensive drug demand reduction initiatives. Amid these efforts, there is a pressing need to underscore the importance of

an evidence-based approach to ensure the sustainability and efficacy of these endeavors. The Philippines' commitment to participating in the Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats, its co-chairmanship in a working group, and its membership in sub-working groups signal a commitment to reinforcing internal initiatives and fostering international cooperation.

Spain

Spain is one of the numerous entry points to Europe for drugs arriving from Central and South America, as well as from the Caribbean and Africa due to historic, cultural, and linguistic ties. Spain is a transit point in Europe for cocaine originating from South America and hashish from Morocco. Cocaine arrives in Spain in large, containerized shipments and in lower-volume shipments via recreational boats and within parasitic devices attached to cargo ships. Domestic drug production is minor, although there is an increasing number of marijuana cultivation operations, both indoor and outdoor. There are also illegal labs involved in cutting, mixing, and reconstituting cocaine, as well as heroin and methamphetamine labs.

The Government of Spain extends significant efforts to combat drug trafficking, which it ranks as one of its most important law enforcement priorities. Its counterdrug efforts have resulted in significant drug seizures utilizing strong border control and coastal monitoring, sophisticated geospatial detection technology, domestic police action, internal affairs investigations, and strong bilateral and multilateral law enforcement cooperation with international partners, to include the United States. In 2022 (the most recent year for which data is available) Spain seized 58 metric tons (MT) of cocaine, 324 MT of hashish, and 56,000 units of amphetamines. In April 2023 Spanish authorities, in conjunction with Portugal's Judicial Police and Colombia's Anti-Narcotics Directorate, dismantled the largest cocaine paste processing laboratory in Europe with a capacity to produce up to 200 kilograms per day. In August 2023, Spain reported its single largest seizure of cocaine to date (10 MT), in cooperation with international partners.

Spain remains vigilant of the fentanyl threat. U.S. law enforcement agencies provided Spanish authorities training and fentanyl field test kits in 2023. As a result, Spain's National Drug Lab began screening for fentanyl in suspected opioid overdoses for the first time.

The Spanish government continued to implement its 2017-24 national strategy to fight addiction. The strategy prioritizes prevention, reduction of risk factors, and improved treatment options. Spanish health authorities estimate that 8.6 percent of Spaniards aged 15 to 64 consumed cannabis and 2.4 percent consumed cocaine over the last year. Authorities reported low levels of consumption in synthetic drugs and synthetic cannabinoids. Spain registered over 44,000 drug treatment admissions in 2021 with

cocaine driving the majority of cases. Spain reported 1,045 deaths related to the use of psychoactive substances in 2022.

Suriname

A. Introduction

Suriname is a transit country for South American cocaine en route to Europe. Cargo containers carry most illicit drugs smuggled through Suriname, but commercial and private air transport, and human couriers, also conceal smuggled cocaine. Suriname's sparsely populated coastal region and isolated jungle interior, together with weak border controls and infrastructure, make illicit drug detection and interdiction efforts difficult. Proceeds from Suriname's illicit drug smuggling, including cash and gold, are reportedly smuggled into the United States, primarily via Miami, Florida. While the government has taken steps to counter illicit trafficking, Suriname should increase its resources and focus to better root out corruption and combat financial crimes.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

The Government of Suriname condemns drug trafficking, but corruption, bureaucratic hurdles, and the lack of financial and material resources inhibit its ability to apprehend and prosecute drug traffickers. Four units in the Suriname Police Force (KPS) are responsible for drug control activities. The KPS Narcotics Brigade investigates and arrests individuals involved in trafficking illicit drugs. The Combating International Drug Trafficking Unit works with the canine unit to screen airport passengers and their luggage on flights departing the one international airport.

With U.S. support, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) supports the Container Control Unit (CCU), which has specific drug-control responsibilities at Suriname's shipping ports. The CCU uses risk analysis and other proactive techniques to systematically target high-risk containers. Suriname's Customs authorities oversee CCU's operations and inspections.

The Attorney General focused on deterring drug shipments by identifying and destroying illegal airstrips. In the first nine months of 2023, the Judicial Intervention

Team (JIT), under the office of the Attorney General, has identified and destroyed eight illegal airstrips in the interior of Suriname. Media reported that drug traffickers take flights from Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, or Brazil and land at these illegal airstrips where they purportedly get fuel and other supplies before moving the illicit drugs toward the final destination in Europe.

Suriname is a party to the Inter-American Convention against Corruption and Migrant Smuggling and the Inter-American Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters. Since 1976, Suriname has shared drug-related information with the Netherlands as part of a mutual legal assistance agreement among former Dutch colonies to exchange crime-related data. Suriname has also signed bilateral agreements to combat drug trafficking with Brazil, Venezuela, and Colombia. In 1999, the United States and Suriname completed a comprehensive bilateral maritime counternarcotics enforcement agreement that remains in force.

The United States and Suriname signed a Cooperative Situational Information Integration (CSII) agreement in August 2023, giving Suriname access to maritime tracking information in the Caribbean supplied by Caribbean Community and Common Market CARICOM countries via the CSII system. The agreement marks an important step in improving regional security and combatting transnational crime.

The government of Suriname agreed in September 2023 to begin negotiations to enter into an Air Intercept Assistance Agreement with the United States.

2. Supply Reduction

Suriname remains a transshipment point for illicit drugs. During the first nine months of 2023 the Suriname Police Force confiscated 139.2 kilograms (kg) of cocaine, 16,978 milliliters of liquid cocaine, 45.7 kg of marijuana, 7.5 kg of hashish, and 3,215 MDMA (ecstasy) tablets.

An estimated 350 narcotics flights transited Suriname in the first nine months of 2023, each carrying an average of 1,000 kg of cocaine, likely transported to ports for overseas destinations. The estimated value of these shipments is more than \$4.2 billion. President Chan Santhoki and Minister of Defense Krishna Mathorea have publicly acknowledged this drug trafficking problem. Finance and Planning Minister

Stanley Rhageobarsign has stated that much of the proceeds of drug trafficking in the form of cash and gold is smuggled into the United States via Miami.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

Little data exists on the extent of illicit drug use in Suriname. The public health system has limited capabilities, including for drug treatment. The Minister of Health warned the public in late September 2022 that SNUS, a legal type of tobacco product popular in Europe, could find its way to Suriname. While it is legal, he described SNUS as highly addictive and targeted to children. SNUS is a licit oral smokeless tobacco product which is usually placed behind the upper lip, either in a loose form or in portioned sachets, which resemble miniature tea bags.

4. Corruption

The Government of Suriname does not encourage or facilitate illegal activity associated with drug trafficking. However, there is evidence senior government officials are engaged in corruption and narcotics trafficking. Widespread, and credible allegations suggest that drug-related corruption pervades many government institutions, including the police. The lack of arrests and convictions in large drug cases supports this premise.

Evidence suggests much of the cocaine is trafficked through Paramaribo's port. Previously, officials provided various reasons as to why the container scanner at Paramaribo's Jules Sedney Harbor, which is a critical tool in identifying narcotics and illegal items, was not used. Officials claimed they had not received training to analyze the scanned images; they alleged customs officials did not share images with other agencies; and they argued officials lacked procedures to analyze the images and share the results. Officials explained that a camera system intended to oversee the port and prevent crimes including narcotics trafficking was purchased but was not installed.

In October 2022 the United States provided training through UNODC and the World Customs Organization for Suriname Customs agents to analyze images from the container scanner at the Jules Sedney Harbor. In December 2022 the container

scanner stopped working after a city-wide power outage. After nine months of advocacy, the scanner was reportedly fixed in September 2023.

The airport's primary radar was out of service until mid-2023. When asked if air traffic controllers used the radar to track air traffic the civil aviation authority said it was not trained to use the radar.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

The United States supports a range of efforts designed to address corruption and trafficking in Suriname, primarily through the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI). CBSI is a security partnership between the United States and Caribbean nations that seeks to substantially reduce illicit trafficking, public corruption, financial crimes and enhance police professionalization through capacity-building. CBSI support to Suriname includes training and equipment - primarily to the KPS, justice sector, and National Security Directorate (DNV) – to prevent and interdict drug trafficking, enhance border enforcement capabilities, and combat money laundering and corruption. To a lesser extent, assistance to combat wildlife trafficking, illegal gold mining, and human trafficking is provided through other U.S.-funded mechanisms.

Through the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in San Salvador, El Salvador, 95 Suriname government officials from various institutions received training in 2023.

D. Conclusion

Surinamese President Santokhi's public statements against illicit activity in Suriname align with U.S. priorities. His government's efforts to stop corruption, including by instituting an anti-corruption commission, are commendable. As Suriname's budget stabilizes, the government should take steps to increase the effectiveness of drug interdiction, investigations, and prosecutions. Equipping vetted police units, while rooting out corrupt elements, would help enforce the rule of law. The United States recommends Suriname address widespread corruption and financial crimes and continue to partner with like-minded countries on security and law enforcement issues.

Tajikistan

A. Introduction

Tajikistan's poorly controlled border with Afghanistan positions it as the primary transit country along the "Northern Route" for Afghanistan-sourced opiates and cannabis destined for Russian and European markets and beyond. As the poorest of the Central Asian states, domestic recreational drug use is minimal but increasing.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

Tajikistan's national budget for counternarcotics is unknown, though counternarcotics and border security agencies have received support from the United States and other international donors for many years. This assistance has helped these agencies to be reasonably equipped and benefit from regular training focused on building sustainable capacity, a goal yet to be reached. Tajikistan lacks the ability and resources to sustain training, maintain donor-provided equipment, and support meaningful investigative and enforcement operations. Investigations are hampered by strong reluctance of some officials to pursue investigations that may disrupt corrupt interests, possibly including their own. Working level enforcement is restrained and susceptible to influence, and frequently proceeds only after receiving authorization from the highest levels. Based on its location between Afghanistan, the world's largest opiates supplier, and the Russian and European consumer markets, Tajikistan's drug seizure numbers are not commensurate with the volume of drugs transiting the country. Tajikistan's northern neighbor, Kyrgyzstan, seized nearly twice as many drugs as Tajikistan this year, most of which were seized crossing the border from Tajikistan.

There is no mutual legal assistance treaty or formalized extradition agreement between Tajikistan and the United States, although Tajikistan is party to multilateral conventions that allow for law enforcement cooperation. Tajikistan is a member of the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Center for Combatting Illicit Trafficking of Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances, and their Precursors

(CARICC). This regional body allows for the exchange of information and law enforcement intelligence and the pursuit of collaborative joint investigations.

2. Supply Reduction

According to Tajikistan's Drug Control Agency (DCA) statistics, in the first half of 2023 Tajik law enforcement agencies seized 2.4 metric tons of illicit drugs, a four percent decrease from the same period in 2022. Comparative analysis shows an 89 percent decrease in heroin seizures, 22 percent increase in hashish seizures, and 51 percent decrease in opium seizures. Cannabis seizures declined by 49 percent. Tajik law enforcement agencies seized 2,955 tablets of synthetic psychotropic substances (605 MDMA, 176 phenobarbital, 2,174 pregabalin), a one percent increase in seizures made in the same period in 2022. In the first half of 2023 Tajik law enforcement agencies destroyed 1,324,348 cannabis plants, a 64 percent increase from 2022.

No seizures of fentanyl or its precursors or other synthetic opioids or analogues have been reported.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

Based on Tajik Ministry of Health data, during the first six months of 2023, 4,183 drug addicts were registered (4,080 men and 103 women) - a six percent decline from 2022. There are 42 people suffering from substance use disorders per 100,000 people in Tajikistan, a 14 percent decrease from the same period of 2022. Ministry of Health data reported no persons under the age of 18. Intravenous drug users may elect to register with the Republican Narcological Center for five years, which allows them to receive methadone through internationally funded HIV prevention projects. Registration comes with several negative impacts: registered persons cannot receive government employment, a driver's license, or access to a marriage permit. This last is because registering for a marriage license requires a valid drug test. These consequences of registration likely lead to an undercount of the actual illicit drug users in the country.

The United States and international donors fund drug demand reduction programs throughout Tajikistan. Educational campaigns increase awareness of the harmful

effects of drug use by using media, newspaper articles, sporting events, and information dissemination campaigns focused on Tajikistan's youth, students, military personnel, and populations living in remote areas.

4. Corruption

In stated policy, the Tajik Government does not encourage or facilitate illegal activity associated with drug trafficking. Tajikistan has enacted anti-corruption legislation. However, enforcement is selective and generally ineffective. There were no reports of significant arrests, prosecutions, or convictions related to corruption involving illicit drugs in 2023.

Corruption is endemic in Tajikistan. State government employees, including senior level officials and agency heads, receive low salaries. The profitability of narcotics transactions; the ability to exercise control over cross-border commerce through imports and exports; and other lucrative opportunities in the control of law enforcement, the judiciary, and government officials, all provide opportunities for corruption.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

In 2023, the United States provided funding to support Tajikistan's counternarcotics efforts through training, equipment, institutional development, and operational support. Much of the assistance focused on the DCA, Tajikistan's principal counternarcotics organization. However, U.S. funding is shifting toward border security forces and supporting reactive forces within the Ministry of Interior, due to growing threats from Afghanistan. While the DCA is a competent, willing, and professional investigative body, its effectiveness is limited by a persistent lack of resources and modern investigative tools.

A Letter of Agreement between the United States and Tajikistan outlines U.S. support for security assistance focused on enhancing the counternarcotics and law enforcement capability of the DCA and the Border Guard Service through the provision of training, equipment, and institutional development activities.

Tajikistan's cooperation on investigations with U.S. counternarcotics agencies is limited to significant cases, but there may be opportunities for expanded partnership.

D. Conclusion

Malign actors use the same smuggling routes, methodologies, and financial networks for drugs as for arms and human trafficking. Tajikistan remains unwilling to recognize the interim Taliban government and is more skeptical of cooperation with the Taliban than most other countries in the region. Since 2021, the Tajik government has repeatedly noted an increase in illicit drug trafficking and expressed concerns about the potential for extremists to cross into Tajikistan from Afghanistan.

Corruption is pervasive in Tajikistan and negatively influences the nation's counternarcotics efforts. In recent years, however, the Tajik government has charged senior counternarcotics officers with corruption, reflecting the government's readiness, in some cases, to tackle high-level corruption.

Tanzania

Tanzania is a significant transit country, and increasingly a destination country, for illicit drugs. Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) and courier networks transport illicit drugs via maritime vessels, air travel, and fast parcel services through Tanzania to destinations in Europe and North America. Asia and Middle East were also significant destinations for transiting drugs in 2023. Trafficking of heroin and methamphetamine pose the most significant threat; Tanzania produces marijuana and khat for domestic consumption and international distribution.

The counternarcotics bilateral relationship with Tanzania – primarily with Tanzania’s Drug Control and Enforcement Authority (DCEA) – yielded record-breaking joint investigations in 2023. The DCEA made over 50 arrests and seized approximately 146 kilograms (kg) of heroin, 310 kg of marijuana, and 20 kg of cocaine. Seizures included illicit gold and wildlife trafficking commodities. In addition, authorities executed two raids and seized approximately 70 metric tons of processed marijuana and destroyed over 1,700 hectares of marijuana plants. The DCEA executed two significant actions in November 2022, which included 11 arrests and seizures of 75 kg of heroin and \$100,000 in cash. Many investigations were supported by the Tanzania Police Force and the Tanzania People’s Defense Force.

Due to effective information sharing and cooperation between the United States and Tanzania, the investigations led to successful efforts to dismantle and/or hinder the operations of several known TCOs operating in Tanzania. The extradition relationship with Tanzania is productive.

The United States convened the first Forensic Chemists Workshop in Tanzania for members of the DCEA, which included training on synthetic and precursor drugs. Following the workshop, Tanzania joined the Global Coalition to Address the Threat of Synthetic Drugs.

Tanzanians have increasingly developed substance use disorders. As of October, there are 16 U.S.-supported Medical Assisted Therapy (MAT) clinics in Tanzania, which have provided lifesaving health services to over 6,000 people who inject drugs (PWID).

The United States promotes interdiction operations through law enforcement cooperation and supports the Tanzanian government's commitment to interdicting illicit drugs, combatting corruption, and improving criminal justice. Extradition between Tanzania and the United States is governed by the 1931 U.S.-UK Extradition Treaty and implemented pursuant to Tanzania's domestic Extradition Act. There is no U.S.-Tanzania bilateral mutual legal assistance treaty, though both countries are parties to multilateral conventions with provisions for assistance. The Tanzanian government does not encourage or facilitate the production or trafficking of illicit drugs as a matter of policy, though drug traffickers use financial incentives to influence politicians, law enforcement, and others in power.

Thailand

As the United States and Thailand celebrate 190 years of diplomatic relations, the United States remains Thailand's law enforcement partner of choice across a range of issues, including counternarcotics. Thailand and the United States enjoy close cooperation on law enforcement matters, including bilateral extradition and mutual legal assistance treaties. With U.S. assistance in facilitating and enhancing cooperation, Thailand is an effective and cooperative partner. The United States works closely with Thai counterparts on investigations and provides specialized training and equipment, including support to a Sensitive Investigative Unit.

Thailand does not cultivate or produce significant quantities of opiates, methamphetamine, or other illicit drugs, nor is it a significant source or transit country for drugs entering the United States. Thailand's foremost drug control challenge is addressing the flow of methamphetamine from neighboring Burma, most of which transits through Thailand to other markets in the Indo-Pacific region, but some of which is consumed domestically. Heroin, largely from Burma, and ketamine, mainly from Cambodia, also continues to threaten Thailand and the region.

In September 2023, Thai Prime Minister Srettha stated publicly that the cannabis laws passed in 2022 would be revisited. As part of that legislation Thailand removed most forms of cannabis and their extracts containing no more than 0.2 percent tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) from the list of controlled substances in the Narcotics Act, but left intact that there is no THC limit on the sale of cannabis flowers. Cannabis cannot be sold to pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, and persons under 20 years of age, or be smoked in public places, consumed for recreational purposes, or imported.

During the first nine months of 2023, Thai authorities seized approximately 38 million methamphetamine tablets, 22 metric tons (MT) of crystal methamphetamine, 688 kilograms (kg) of ketamine, 688 kg of heroin, 24 kg of cocaine, 67 kg of sodium cyanide, and 535 MT of non-specific precursor chemicals. Criminal penalties vary by narcotics classification, ranging from monetary fines to life imprisonment. The death penalty exists but is rarely imposed.

Substance use has been a significant social and public health problem in Thailand for decades. “Yaba,” a tablet containing methamphetamine, caffeine, and other stimulants, is the most widely abused drug in Thailand. It is estimated that a single “Yaba” pill is sold for approximately \$0.50 in Bangkok, Thailand. Thailand carries out demand reduction, drug treatment, and rehabilitation programs.

Trinidad and Tobago

A. Introduction

Trinidad and Tobago (TT) is a transshipment point for illegal drugs destined for the United States, Europe, and the Caribbean. Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) take advantage of the country's proximity to Venezuela, porous borders, vulnerabilities at ports of entry, limited law enforcement capacity and resources, and corruption to traffic illicit drugs. Perennial weak enforcement and corruption in border security units are key vulnerabilities that impede efforts to combat the drug trade in TT. Nevertheless, TT continues to make progress in its efforts to investigate and dismantle drug networks and has emerged as a more eager, more collaborative partner with the United States in 2023.

Trinidad and Tobago does not produce or manufacture legal synthetic drugs. Synthetic drugs are included in the TT Dangerous Drug Act, and regulated to prevent illicit manufacture, diversion, distribution, shipment, and trafficking. Three entities regulate precursor chemical activities in TT: the TT Drug Inspectorate, the Chemistry, Food and Drug Division, and the Customs and Excise Division (CED). TT maintains a precursor chemical operator registry, import and export license registry, and regularly inspects records and premises of importers, wholesalers, and manufacturers.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

TT's drug control institutions are challenged by inadequate staffing, equipment, interagency coordination, and funding. However, authorities are making progress on breaking down silos within law enforcement and intelligence agencies and improving coordination on counternarcotics efforts. The Government of TT collaborated with the United States to improve border security by enhancing the TT Coast Guard Operations Center and providing four riverine vessels for river and near-shore missions. TT is developing its investigative and information-sharing capacity, which includes working with the United States on the creation of a multi-agency Vetted Unit, to investigate serious crimes. It is also working with the United States to

reduce case backlogs by promoting the use of plea bargaining to resolve criminal prosecutions, which currently can take years. Lastly, the United States funded training for 86 senior law enforcement personnel.

The National Drug Council, the body responsible for coordinating TT's antidrug policy, received \$200,000 in the proposed budget for 2022-2023. The National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Program (NADAPP) continued building capacity in the drug demand reduction sector and focused on strengthening collaboration with key stakeholders through targeted training sessions. NADAPP continued outreach activities in schools, communities, and workplaces, which included drug education sessions and information booths.

TT awarded a \$13.2 million contract to procure four mobile container scanners for installation at two major ports, which will increase customs-clearance speed, and increase contraband detection.

TT has mutual legal assistance and extradition treaties with the United States. The country is also party to several agreements with the United States, including a drug control and law enforcement letter of agreement, a maritime law enforcement agreement that enables the United States to patrol TT waters and detain vessels suspected of trafficking drugs, a ship rider agreement that allows U.S. law enforcement detachments aboard TT Coast Guard vessels, and a customs mutual assistance agreement.

2. Supply Reduction

TT law enforcement reported seizing 226 kilograms (kg) of cocaine and 1.5 metric tons of marijuana during the first nine months of 2023, compared to seizures of 5 kg and 378 kg respectively in 2022. In May, the United States assisted the TT Police Service Special Investigations Unit (TTPS/SIU) and the Transnational Organized Crime Unit (TOCU) in an investigation which culminated in the arrest of three TT nationals and seizure of 168 kg of cocaine, worth over \$34.5 million (the largest land seizure of drugs in TT history). The United States assisted the TT TOCU in an investigation and arrest of an alleged narcotrafficker, who is charged with trafficking at least \$1 million worth of heroin and cocaine to the United States. Lastly, the United States worked with TOCU to accomplish the seizure of 1,650 kg (worth \$330

million) of cocaine in Spain, buoyed by surveillance information provided by the United States as the drugs transited TT.

Marijuana is the only known locally produced illicit organic drug in TT. Though not a significant area of focus, TT authorities periodically eradicate cannabis farms.

In a first for TT, Special Branch police raided a clandestine lab and seized over a pound of methamphetamine, precursor elements used to make methamphetamine, and equipment used in its manufacture. The alleged perpetrator is a 24-year-old Chinese citizen businessman who has resided in TT for over a decade. This raid was carried out against the same organized crime group as one that was raided in 2021 in Trincity, in which Chinese organized crime produced crystal ketamine, partially for the purpose of drugging Venezuelan women they trafficked. The primary suspect arrested for the crystal ketamine production and human trafficking received travel documents from the PRC Embassy, allowing him to abscond from TT. As in China, illegal drug manufacture and trafficking in TT goes hand in hand with organized crime (Rasta City, The Muslims [gang], Triads, and Tongs). The inputs observed in this clandestine manufacture were Cetamol Cold and Flu (local brand that has 30 milligrams of pseudoephedrine per capsule). The process for synthesis is indeterminate based on the seizure.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

The Drug Information Network of TT (DIN-TT) is the primary information portal for national drug-related data and is managed by the Ministry of National Security through the National Drug Council. This network maintains a multi-disciplinary platform for the sharing and discussion of drug supply and drug control data with stakeholders and generally enhances the capacity to develop data collection and the accurate interpretation of trends. It also provides a bridge to guide policy and the implementation of demand reduction activities.

There are several drug treatment programs in TT, primarily managed by the Ministry of Health, as well as programs administered and privately funded by Non-Governmental Organizations, religious groups, and hospitals. With the Organization of American States, TT launched the U.S.-funded Case Care Management Program in October 2021. In October 2023, 12 people graduated from this two-year program

that focused on addressing substance use disorders and provided alternatives to incarceration for people referred from the drug treatment courts, community service orders, and probationers.

4. Corruption

As a matter of policy, TT does not encourage or facilitate illegal activity associated with drug trafficking or the laundering of proceeds from illicit drug transactions. Nonetheless, there are persistent reports of drug-related corruption in the ranks of law enforcement, border security entities, and the postal system, which facilitates the transshipment and distribution of illicit drugs. TT has passed several laws to address corruption, including passing a Proceeds of Crime Act and the partially adoption of a Civil Asset Forfeiture Law. However, TT has not yet operationalized a civil asset management agency.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

The United States and TT law enforcement maintain a cooperative relationship, including collaborating closely on improving security at legal ports of entry and helping to expand the role of TT law enforcement in regional narcotics interdiction efforts.

The United States supports a wide range of efforts designed to address crime and violence affecting TT citizens, primarily through the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) and other programming, such as Project GRACE. Through CBSI, the United States provides counternarcotics training and capacity building for relevant institutions. Through Project GRACE, the United States provides training, engagement, and builds capability in intelligence-led gang investigations. This facilitates ongoing dialogue and training between TTPS and the judiciary to improve TT's probability of successful gang related prosecutions.

The United States and TT maintain a bilateral agreement to suppress illicit traffic by sea, which includes ship boarding, expedited operations center communications, ship rider operations, and operations within territorial seas.

D. Conclusion

Cooperation between the United States and TT on drug trafficking and transnational crime was productive in 2023 and trending upward. TT has increased its cooperation with the United States and both countries have benefited. The United States has spent almost \$3.2 million on counternarcotics-related training, capacity building, and equipment in TT.

TT should continue to strengthen border security, including expanding the use of technology to aid interdiction efforts at ports of entry. It should also increase its efforts to combat public corruption that facilitates transnational crime, including the establishment of strong oversight and accountability mechanisms within the TT Customs and Excise Division. The government should also increase its efforts to combat public corruption that facilitates transnational crime, including using its civil asset forfeiture law and unexplained wealth order provisions.

Türkiye

Türkiye's location at the crossroads of Asia and Europe and its inadequate controls for addressing illicit finance make it a significant transit country for illicit drug trafficking.

Terrorist groups operating in and around Türkiye provide logistics, protection, and other support to drug smugglers. Criminal organizations facilitate large shipments of heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamine from South America and Mexico to Europe and Asia. Syrian drug traffickers play a significant role in Türkiye's drug trade. According to statistics published in 2023, the Turkish National Police (TNP), working with customs officials at borders and ports, in 2022 reportedly seized 7.9 metric tons (MT) of heroin; 71.9 MT of marijuana; 2.3 MT of cocaine; 5,050,325 ecstasy tablets; 23,745,026 captagon tablets; 109,572,459 cannabis plants; and 12,607,432 tablets of synthetic pharmaceuticals. According to the Turkish government's 2023 "National Drug Report," from 2015-2023 Turkish law enforcement cooperated with 23 countries on 60 counternarcotics operations, which collectively resulted in the seizure of approximately 61 MT of cannabis, 3.1 MT of heroin, 7.3 MT of cocaine, 504,000 ecstasy tablets, and 9,600,000 captagon tablets.

Turkish Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya underlined the importance of Türkiye's fight against drugs as a top priority for the Interior Ministry and since becoming Interior Minister in June 2023, Turkish law enforcement conducted 80,572 counternarcotics operations and detained 98,198 suspects, of whom 8,379 were placed under arrest and 3,422 placed under judicial control through October. Illegal drug use in Türkiye is relatively low compared to countries in the region, although both TNP and Turkish Customs have reported a large increase in illegal drug use within Türkiye, specifically methamphetamine and cocaine. Cannabis is imported or grown domestically for local consumption.

U.S.-supported professional development exchanges and equipment that strengthened Turkish border enforcement and the capacity of Turkish customs officers has had a positive effect on seizures. Türkiye strictly controls licit opium poppy cultivation and pharmaceutical morphine production, with no apparent diversion into the illicit market. No Turkish government officials have been charged with complicity in drug trafficking or the laundering of drug proceeds in 2023. Türkiye's drug policy under-emphasizes treatment and prevention in favor of aggressive drug seizures.

The government focuses mostly on terrorist networks' heavy involvement in heroin trafficking, especially from Iran and Afghanistan, while pursuit of the large Turkish criminal organizations receives considerably less scrutiny, interdiction, and prosecutions.

Ukraine

This report covers territory currently controlled by the Government of Ukraine only. Pre-war, Ukraine was predominantly a transit country for non-domestically produced drugs, such as cocaine and heroin, frequently bound for consumer markets in the European Union and Russia. Russia's war against Ukraine has had a significant impact on drug use and trafficking in Ukraine. Russian forces have blockaded southern ports on the Black Sea, which drug traffickers previously used as major drug trafficking entry points. Measures the Ukrainian government established under martial law have presented further risk to overland traffickers. As a result, illicit transnational trafficking organizations have shifted their activities to nearby countries.

Russia's war also displaced large segments of Ukraine's population, disrupting production and distribution for domestically produced illicit drugs. Production of drugs for domestic consumption has shifted to small, clandestine operations, with distribution conducted mainly via internet-based sales and delivery through the postal system and "dead drops."

Illicit, domestically produced amphetamines, methadone, Alpha-PVP, and new psychoactive substances (NPS) remain the predominant narcotic threats to Ukrainian society. Medical methadone is widely used for treatment of opioid dependency, harm reduction, and prevention of infectious disease. The National Police of Ukraine (NPU) Counter-Narcotics Department and the State Border Guard Service (SBGS) Investigative Activities Department remain the major anti-narcotics agencies. During the January-September 2023 period, the NPU and SBGS registered 31,890 drug-related criminal offenses. Investigators completed pre-trial investigations against 81 organized crime groups (OCGs) and drug trafficking organizations (DTOs), whose members committed 918 drug-related offences. Of 2,621 suspected drug dealers, the courts have remanded 1,437 in custody. Ukrainian courts directed the seizure of over \$1.4 million in assets. Clandestine drug laboratories continue to be a major problem, with 89 investigated and 94 suspects identified.

Ukrainian law enforcement agencies also took measures to counteract drug diversion offenses. There are 3855 domestic licensed controlled substance manufacturers in Ukraine. There were 49 criminal offenses related to drug circulation violations, 332 criminal offenses related to the illegal sale of potent or poisonous medicines, and 20 criminal offenses related to the falsification or circulation of counterfeit medicines.

Ukrainian law enforcement agencies seized over 2.4 metric tons (MT) of illicit drugs and psychotropic substances, 1.4 MT of cannabis, 776 kilograms (kg) opium poppy, 154 kg Alpha PVP, 47.7 kg amphetamine, 8.9 kg MDMA, 7.5 kg methadone, 5.8 kg methamphetamine, 3.1 kg cocaine, 0.4 kg heroin, approximately 2.3 MT of precursor chemicals, and lesser quantities of other illicit drugs and NPS. There were no seizures of fentanyl or fentanyl precursors reported.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom (UK) is a major consumer and transshipment country for illicit drugs. As a transit point, the UK primarily receives illicit drugs originating in Central and South America bound for third country markets. Consumption rates for cocaine and heroin remain among the highest in Europe. While prices for cocaine and heroin increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, cocaine prices dropped by 30 percent and heroin prices dropped by 33 percent in 2022 (the most recent year for which data is available). Decreased prices are primarily attributed to increased market supply and lower wholesale prices in Europe. UK authorities report wholesale drug prices are likely to return to pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2023.

Scotland continues to have the highest proportion of drug-related deaths in the UK with 245 deaths per million. Authorities reported 82 percent of drug-related deaths in 2022 resulted from opioids/opiates and 57 percent resulted from benzodiazepine. In the first six months of 2023, Scottish authorities reported 600 suspected drug-related deaths, a seven percent increase compared to the same period for 2022.

Cannabis is among the largest drug markets in the UK. Cannabis cultivation operates at an industrial scale and is often linked to other offences including benefit fraud, energy theft, modern slavery, robbery, and violence. UK authorities report annual consumption continues to be approximately 240 tons. In early 2023, UK law enforcement began increasing scrutiny in response to cannabis seizures in luggage on flights between the United States and the UK. Criminal organizations often use the income generated from cannabis trafficking to fund other illicit activities, including the purchase of cocaine and heroin.

The UK remains vigilant on the synthetic opioid threat. In February 2023, the UK Home Office classified isotonitazene, along with 10 other synthetic opioids, as Class A drugs (following a 2021 report on increased overdoses and deaths resulting from the use of isotonitazene). The possession of such synthetic opioids is now illegal, and anyone who supplies the drugs will face up to life in prison, an unlimited fine, or both. The UK government reported 29 nitazene-linked overdoses between June and October.

The United States and the UK enjoy a strong bilateral relationship and cooperate closely on multilateral drug enforcement efforts. U.S. law enforcement agencies, as part of the Heroin Signature Program, work closely with UK authorities on laboratory testing for drugs. Further, the United States continues to conduct coordinated drug trafficking and money laundering investigations with UK law enforcement agencies.

Uzbekistan

A. Introduction

Uzbekistan is primarily a transit country for illicit drugs. Criminal groups transport Afghan-produced narcotics to Russia and Europe. Uzbek authorities emphasize the need to counter illicit drug sales via the internet and social media, and they have also underscored the need to address money laundering from the sale of illicit drugs.

Smuggling and sales of synthetic drugs and controlled substances rose in 2023. Expanded methamphetamine production in Afghanistan over the past few years also adversely affects Uzbekistan. Poppy and cannabis cultivation generally occur on a small scale in rural households and are intended for personal use. Authorities registered an increased number of drug users in 2023.

Uzbekistan faces several challenges in combatting drug trafficking, including expanded heroin trade originating from neighboring countries, the illicit sale and consumption of synthetic drugs, prescription medicines, and other psychotropic substances, and insufficient international coordination and investigation practices. The country implemented multiple drug prevention measures during 2023, though there is insufficient data to substantiate the programs' effectiveness.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

Uzbekistan's 2021-2025 Program for Comprehensive Measures to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking guides the country's drug control strategy. Based on this strategy, law enforcement agencies' counternarcotics units and other government agencies develop roadmaps and plans of activities. The National Center on Drug Control (NCDC) coordinates implementation of the program.

The government noted an expansion of drug trafficking during the reporting period. Key challenges include: rising consumption of psychotropic substances and non-medical use of prescription medicines; a rise in the trafficking of synthetic drugs and psychoactive substances exacerbated by growing production of synthetic drugs in

Afghanistan and Kazakhstan; limited capabilities to counter illicit narcotics sales via the internet; lack of reliable drug use data; insufficient international cooperation in narcotics investigations with the United States and neighboring countries; and lack of technical law enforcement capacity.

Uzbek law enforcement effectively conducted joint operations and made several large drug arrests in 2023, including the country's largest-ever single seizure - 8.5 metric tons of illicit poppy straw. However, the overall scale of combating illicit cultivation of poppy plants diminished in 2023. Uzbek courts reviewed 2,030 drug trafficking criminal cases and sentenced 2,389 individuals, with 8.3 percent fewer convictions in the first six months of 2023 than during the same period of 2022. Uzbekistan did not pass significant counternarcotics legislation in the first nine months of 2023.

The scope of counternarcotics cooperation with the U.S. government is limited. The country does not have agreements on extradition and mutual legal assistance with the United States, although it is a party to multilateral conventions that enable law enforcement cooperation. Memoranda of Understanding between the United States and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, NCDC, and the Prosecutor General Office's Financial Intelligence Unit remain in effect but are rarely used.

Uzbekistan is a party to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's (SCO) 2004 Agreement on Cooperation among SCO Member States in Combating Illicit Trafficking of Drugs, Psychotropic Substances, and Precursors. Beyond the SCO, Uzbekistan is a member of the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre (CARICC).

2. Supply Reduction

Uzbekistan's illicit drug market is defined by sustained transit of Afghan drugs including heroin and methamphetamine, growing drug and psychotropic pill sales on social media, expanding clandestine laboratories in neighboring countries, and non-medical use of prescription medicines.

From May to June 2023, law enforcement agencies conducted the first phase of the annual counternarcotics operation Black Poppy aimed at seizing plant-based drugs

and eradicating small poppy and marijuana cultivation. Law enforcement identified 1,271 drug crimes during the operation, a 27 percent increase from 2022, and seized 155.1 kilograms (kg) of drugs, a 20 percent decrease from 2022.

Authorities released drug data for 2022 in June in which they reported seizing 2.23 metric tons of drugs, a 19.8 percent increase from 2021. During the first nine months of 2023, law enforcement agencies and media reported the following seizures: 58.6 kg of heroin; 98.3 kg of opium; 293.8 kg of hashish; 164.5 kg of marijuana; 53.3 kg of poppy straw; 44.2 kg of synthetic drugs, including 21.7 kg of methamphetamine, 96.49 kg of pregabalin psychoactive substances, and over nine tons of poppy straw, which included a one-time seizure of 8.5 tons, the largest single narcotics seizure in Uzbekistan's history. Forensics laboratories and customs officials trained by U.S.-funded programs directly contributed to the detection and seizure of 96.49 kg of pregabalin, 21.7 kg of methamphetamine and 8.5 tons of poppy straw in 2023.

Law enforcement detected 5,096 drug-related crimes, a 12.7 percent increase, and opened 5,081 criminal cases, a 12.5 percent increase, in the first half of 2023 than in the same timeframe in 2022.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

Illicit drug use in Uzbekistan is marked by the growing use of hashish, opium, marijuana, synthetic drugs, and psychotropic substances. Uzbekistan has limited data availability on drug use to corroborate the effectiveness of its drug prevention and rehabilitation programs. However, the NCDC provides consolidated data on drug seizures and prevention measures, and the media reports on seizures. The Program of Further Development of Uzbekistan's Narcological Service 2022-2026 guides the country's prevention and treatment activities.

Among its prevention activities, the Uzbek government facilitated over 10,000 meetings and events at schools, community centers, and workplaces during drug prevention month, reaching over 930,000 youth. Government agencies also conducted outreach campaigns on the negative effects of drug abuse via traditional and social media platforms. There is insufficient data to evaluate the effectiveness of these prevention measures.

The Republican Specialized Scientific and Practical Medical Centre for Mental Health oversees the work of 14 residential drug treatment centers across the country and two specialized hospitals. These public centers lack capacity and funding, and drug users are reluctant to use the facilities due to social stigmatization about using illicit narcotics.

4. Corruption

Uzbekistan does not encourage or facilitate drug trafficking activities, nor is there evidence of senior government officials' engagement in such activity. Although there is pervasive public corruption at multiple levels, high-profile convictions of senior officials have typically not involved drug crimes. There are no laws covering drug-related corruption.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

The United States supports strengthening Uzbekistan's ability to address security and criminal threats, bolster regional stability and cooperation, and aims to disrupt and reduce illicit drug markets and transnational crime.

The United States cooperates with Uzbekistan within the multilateral frameworks of the Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats and the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs. The United States is also currently funding the third phase of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's Interagency Mobile Teams (IMTs) and Forensics projects. This assistance aims to enhance Uzbek law enforcement and forensic laboratories' capacities to combat drug trafficking and detect drug evidence.

D. Conclusion

Uzbekistan maintains a strong commitment to drug control and prevention but remains unwilling to share information with foreign governments on counternarcotics investigations and drug abuse. This reluctance is a significant challenge to increasing bilateral and multilateral cooperation to combat narcotics trafficking and to craft effective drug demand reduction activities. Uzbekistan should actively share data on investigations, drug use, and drug control efforts both bilaterally and multilaterally to

strengthen its international cooperation and develop more effective counternarcotics programs.

Venezuela

A. Introduction

Venezuela remains a major drug-transit country and preferred trafficking route in the Western Hemisphere for illegal drugs, predominately cocaine. Given ongoing economic crises, Nicolas Maduro's representatives continue to use rents from narcotrafficking, along with other illicit activities, to help maintain their de facto control. Their lack of international drug control cooperation; usurpation of the judicial system, military, and security services for illicit ends; public corruption; and cooperation with non-state armed actors and criminal elements provided ideal conditions for drug trafficking operations and associated violence. Growing evidence of coca cultivation and cocaine production in domestic drug laboratories suggests Venezuela is now an illicit drug-producing country as well as a transit country. Evidence suggests Venezuela has a significant domestic drug consumption problem.

B. Drug Control Accomplishments, Policies, and Trends

1. Institutional Development

Since 2005, the United States has determined annually that Venezuela has failed demonstrably to make substantial efforts to both adhere to its obligations under international counternarcotics agreements and to take the required measures to counter narcotics trafficking. Venezuela and the United States have had a Bilateral Counter-narcotics Memorandum of Understanding since 1978, but Venezuela declined to sign a negotiated addendum to this agreement in 2005.

Venezuela is not a member of the Cooperative Situational Information Integration System through which countries predetermine information to share automatically with the United States. Maduro actors do not share information on counternarcotics activity with U.S. officials. In 2021, Maduro created the National Anti-Drug Superintendency (SUNAD) via the Organic Drug Law of 2010, replacing the National Anti-Drug Office (ONA) and appointed Major General Richard López Vargas as the first National Anti-Drug Superintendent. Lopez Vargas was previously the head of the ONA and a former Commander General of the Bolivarian National Guard.

Maduro representatives stated the reform of the Organic Drug Law was to reinforce the control mechanisms against illicit drug trafficking in the national territory, as well as to prevent the consumption and misuse of drugs, but reports of their direct involvement in both trafficking and misuse continued in 2023.

2. Supply Reduction

Venezuela remains a major transit country for cocaine shipments via aerial, terrestrial, and maritime routes. Most originates in Colombia and transits through Venezuela, with shipments then trafficked north through Central America or the Caribbean islands - eventually ending up in the United States - or southeast to Brazil, Guyana, or Suriname, either for consumption in South America or transit to Europe. A Venezuelan non-governmental organization assessed that cocaine trafficked through Venezuela in 2023 likely persisted at the same levels as the estimated 200 to 250 metric tons (MT) the United States estimated in 2020 - representing roughly 10 to 13 percent of estimated global production.

UNODC's 2023 Global Report on Cocaine identified Venezuela as a major point of departure for flights transporting cocaine from South America towards Mexico. In May 2022, InSight Crime reported evidence of coca cultivation and cocaine processing in Zulia and Apure states by Colombian guerilla groups, and an August 2023 InSight Crime report cited evidence of coca cultivation in Amazonas state. In August 2023, a report by media outlet Armando.info and Brazilian NGO InfoAmazonia indicated that local indigenous people confirmed the presence of drug laboratories and clandestine airstrips in Amazonas state.

Maduro representatives continued to make sweeping claims about their counternarcotics efforts. SUNAD reported that 41.6 MT of drugs were seized in 2022. On September 12, 2023, SUNAD reported that 33.5 MT of drugs had been seized and 11,612 people detained in connection with drug trafficking crimes. SUNAD also reported destroying four cocaine processing camps in Zulia with the assistance of the armed forces. However, experts were unable to independently verify these claims. Statistics remained unreliable, and experts assessed apprehensions were often aimed at those who failed to bribe or work with the de facto authorities and the military.

3. Public Information, Prevention, and Treatment

Maduro's attorney general Tarek William Saab, in coordination with SUNAD, continued the "Drugs Destroy Your Family" campaign to raise public awareness of the risks and consequences of using drugs. According to Saab, the program reached 13,138 children and 7,796 adults since it was launched in September 2022. On July 11, 2023, Saab joined 50 prosecutors for a class on the societal impacts of drug crimes.

4. Corruption

Corruption, including among senior members of the Maduro team, judicial, military and security services, is endemic in Venezuela, facilitating drug-trafficking organizations' operations. Armed "colectivos" allied with Maduro's United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), armed Venezuelan-origin gangs, and Colombian guerilla factions dominate drug trafficking routes inside Venezuela. While these criminal organizations move most of the cocaine, it is actors within the state that shape and control the world in which they operate. Along the border region with Colombia, Maduro representatives continued to do little to combat U.S.-designated terrorist groups including National Liberation Army (ELN), Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (FARC-EP), and Segunda Marquetalia, which dominate the drug trafficking routes in the border region and maintain close ties to the de facto authorities. Tren de Aragua, the largest criminal organization in Venezuela with some 5,000 members, originated in Venezuela's prison system as a result of corruption and lack of state control, and has since become influential both within and outside the prison system, continuing to recruit new members and carry out criminal operations including drug trafficking. The group has leveraged the exodus of Venezuelans due to the country's crisis to expand its operations to Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, and Peru, among others.

On September 20, 2023, Maduro representatives reported that 11,000 officials from the military and police conducted a successful raid at the Aragua Penitentiary, the headquarters of Tren de Aragua. On September 23, 2023, Maduro's interior minister Remigio Ceballos said Tren de Aragua had been dismantled and 88 members of the criminal organization were arrested. At least 500 inmates, however, including Tren

de Aragua leaders Hector “El Niño” Guerrero and Josue Santana “Santanita,” escaped from the prison before the raid through tunnels. Local NGO Prisons Observatory assessed this suggested prison officials had alerted Tren de Aragua leaders of the raid in advance as part of a bargain between Maduro representatives and the criminal organization.

Maduro representatives took no legal action against officials, individuals, and companies designated as Specially Designated Narcotics Traffickers or indicted by the United States for playing a significant role in international drug trafficking. Since 2017, the United States has made over 350 Venezuelan-related designations, pursuant to various Executive Orders (E.O.), the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, and the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act. Overall, as of July 2023, the United States had charged dozens of Venezuelan military leaders, politicians and businessmen with corruption and drug trafficking, including Maduro and other current and former Venezuelan officials.

C. National Goals, Bilateral Cooperation, and U.S. Policy Initiatives

Drug control cooperation between Venezuela and the United States has been limited since 2005.

D. Conclusion

Despite Maduro’s stated efforts in countering drug trafficking, the country’s role in the global supply chain of illicit drugs has expanded from being a drug transit zone to becoming a cocaine-producing nation. Maduro representatives failed to meaningfully prosecute suspected drug traffickers, and Venezuela’s use as a transit and origin point for illegal drugs has continued to grow.

Vietnam

Vietnam is a transshipment and destination country for illegal drugs of all types, with most transshipments destined for consumer markets in East Asia and Oceania. Large quantities of synthetic drugs and heroin produced in the Golden Triangle countries of Thailand, Laos, and Burma flow into Vietnam for local consumption and transshipment. Cocaine from South America comes to Vietnam for local consumption and further distribution throughout Southeast Asia and Oceania.

Transnational criminal organizations smuggle drugs into and through Vietnam, exploiting its porous land borders with China, Laos, and Cambodia. Border enforcement is insufficient in terms of both human resources and equipment, hampering efforts to conduct effective counterdrug operations in the mountainous terrain of north, northwest, and central Vietnam. Counternarcotics police across Vietnam's land, air, and sea entry points lack training and the capacity to engage in complex investigations.

During the first half of 2023, the Vietnam Ministry of Public Security (MPS) Counternarcotics Police Department investigated 15,017 drug-related cases, arrested 23,315 offenders, seized 302 kilograms (kg) of heroin, 3 metric tons (MT) of methamphetamine and other synthetic drugs, 200 kg of cannabis, and 66 kg of opium. In comparison to the same period in 2022, these statistics demonstrate a 12 percent increase in investigations, a 221 percent increase in volume of synthetic drugs seized, and a continued downward trend in seizure of traditional drugs like opium and marijuana.

The United States partners with the Government of Vietnam to enhance the capacity of its counternarcotics officers, including those of the MPS, General Department of Vietnam Customs, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, and Ministry of National Defense through training and equipment donations. The United States trained more than 215 counternarcotics officers, customs police, and criminal justice personnel on identification of precursor chemicals, new psychoactive substances, and tactical medical skills in 2023. As part of the upgrade in bilateral U.S.-Vietnam relations in September 2023, the United States and Vietnam also agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation on counternarcotics, including a new bilateral law enforcement and security dialogue track as well as drug demand reduction programs.

Law Enforcement Units

**Law Enforcement Units Funded by the
Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement
Section 489(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961**

Abbreviations of the U.S. agencies that mentor, advise, or train the units listed below refer to the following agencies:

- CBP: Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security
- DEA: Drug Enforcement Administration
- DOD: Department of Defense
- DOJ: Department of Justice
- FBI: Federal Bureau of Investigation
- HSI: Homeland Security Investigations (Department of Homeland Security)
- ICITAP: International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program, DOJ
- ILEA: International Law Enforcement Academy
- INL - Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, Department of State
- LEGATT: Legal Attache, FBI
- ODC: Office of Defense Cooperation, Department of Defense
- OPDAT: Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance and Training, DOJ
- USCG: U.S. Coast Guard
- USMS: U.S. Marshalls Service

Table 7: Albania

Host Country Unit	U.S. Agencies that mentor, advise, or train the unit
Specialized Anticorruption Body (SPAK) – National Bureau of Investigations (NBI)	DEA, ICITAP
SPAK – Special Prosecutor's Office (SPO)	OPDAT
Ministry of Interior, Police Oversight Agency (POA)	ICITAP
Albanian State Police	DEA

Table 8: Bahamas

Host Country Unit	U.S. Agencies that mentor, advise, or train the unit
Royal Bahamas Police Force Marine Service Support Unit	DEA, INL, USCG
Royal Bahamas Police Force Drug Enforcement Unit	DEA, INL, FBI, CBP, HSI, USCG
Royal Bahamas Police Force Financial Crimes Investigative Bureau	DEA, FBI, INL, HSI
Bahamas Customs	HSI, INL, USCG
Royal Bahamas Defence Force	ODC, INL, USCG

Table 9: Belize

Host Country Unit	U.S. Agencies that mentor, advise, or train the unit
Anti-Narcotics Unit	DEA
Mobile Interdiction Team	INL, ILEA, CBP

Table 10: Colombia

Host Country Unit	U.S. Agencies that mentor, advise, or train the unit
Colombian National Police, Antinarcotics Directorate (DIRAN)	DEA
Colombian National Police, Criminal Investigation Directorate (DIJIN)	DEA, FBI, HSI
Colombian Prosecutors Office (CTI)	DEA
Colombian Army (COLAR)	DEA
Customs and National Taxes, (DIAN)	HSI
Colombian Navy (COLNAV)	DEA, ORA
Colombian National Police, Tax and Customs Directorate (POLFA)	HSI

Table 11: Costa Rica

Host Country Unit	U.S. Agencies that mentor, advise, or train the unit
Coast Guard Marine Interdiction Unit	DOD, DEA, USCG, State
DEA Vetted Counternarcotics Unit	DEA, State

Table 12: Dominican Republic

Host Country Unit	U.S. Agencies that mentor, advise, or train the unit
National Drug Control Directorate (DNCD) Sensitive Investigations Unit (SIU)	DEA
Joint Dominican National Police (DNP), Ministry of Defense (MOD), and General Customs Directorate (DGA) Transnational Criminal Investigative Unit (TCIU)	HSI, CBP

DNCD Fugitive Investigative Unit (FIU)	USMS
DNP Organized Crime Special Investigative Unit	FBI LEGATT
DNCD	INL
Dominican Armada (Navy) Maritime Interdiction Operations Center (MOC)	DOD
Specialized Airport and Civil Aviation Security Force (CESAC)	INL, CBP
Specialized Land Border Security Force (CESFRONT)	INL, CBP, DOD
Specialized Seaports Security Force (CESEP)	INL, CBP

Table 13: Ecuador

Host Country Unit	U.S. Agencies that mentor, advise, or train the unit
Ecuador National Police Antinarcotics National Directorate (DNIA)	INL, DEA, and CBP
DNIA Sub-unit: Antidrug Investigations Unit (UIAN)	DEA and INL
DNIA Sub-unit: Ports and Airports Investigations Unit (UNIPA)	INL, DEA, and CBP
DNIA Sub-unit: Chemical Investigations Unit	INL and DEA
DNIA Sub-unit: Investigations Unit against Drug Trafficking for Internal Consumption (UCTCI)	INL

Table 14: El Salvador

Host Country Unit	U.S. Agencies that mentor, advise, or train the unit
Sensitive Investigative Unit	DEA, DOJ
Mobile Electronic Surveillance Team (GETi2)	INL

Tactical Maritime Operations Response Section (STORM)	DEA, INL
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Table 15: Guatemala

Host Country Unit	U.S. Agencies that mentor, advise, or train the unit
Sensitive Investigations Unit (SIU) – PNC SGAIA	DEA
Transnational Anti-Gang (TAG) – PNC, Public Ministry	FBI/DOJ
Transnational Criminal Investigative Unit (TCIU) – PNC/customs (SAT), migration (IGM), national registry (RENAP), Public Ministry	DHS/HSI
Mobile Tactical Interdiction Unit (MTIU) – SGAIA, border police (DIPAFRONT)	DHS/CBP
Narcotics and Money Laundering Prosecutors (UNILAT) – Public Ministry, PNC	DEA
Maritime Intelligence Center (MIC) – PNC	DEA
FEN – Guatemalan Navy	DEA, DOD
Seaport Trade Facilitation Task Force	DHS/CBP

Table 16: Haiti

Host Country Units	U.S. Agencies that mentor, advise, or train the unit
Haitian National Police Counternarcotics Unit (BLTS)	INL
POLIFRONT (Border Police)	INL
Haitian Coast Guard (HCG)	INL, DOD

Table 17: Honduras

Host Country Unit	U.S. Agencies that mentor, advise, or train the unit
HNP Anti-Drug Directorate (DNPA)	INL
Sensitive Investigative Unit (SIU)	DEA/ INL
HNP Special Operations Command (COE)	INL
Honduran Naval Special Forces (FEN)	USCG/ INL
Joint Interagency Operations Center (CCOI)	DOD/ INL
Transnational Criminal Investigative Unit (TCIU)	DHS HSI/ INL
Grupo de Operaciones Especiales Tacticas (GOET)	INL/CBP
Transnational Anti-Gang (TAG) Unit	FBI/ INL

Table 18: Indonesia

Host Country Unit	U.S. Agencies that mentor, advise, or train the unit
BNN Directorate of Enforcement and Pursuit	INL, DEA

Table 19: Jamaica

Jamaica	U.S. Agencies that mentor, advise, or train the unit
Jamaica Constabulary Force Narcotics Division	DEA

Table 20: Kenya

Host Country Unit	U.S. Agencies that mentor, advise, or train the unit
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Kenya National Police Service Directorate of Criminal Investigations Anti-Narcotics Unit, Sensitive Investigations Unit	DEA
Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission Directorate of Investigations, Transnational Criminal Investigations Unit	HSI

Table 21: Laos

Host Country Unit	U.S. Agencies that mentor, advise, or train the unit
Lao Customs Department	CBP, DEA

Table 22: Mexico

Host Country Unit	U.S. Agencies that mentor, advise, or train the unit
Transnational Criminal Investigative Unit	HSI

Table 23: Mozambique

Host Country Unit	U.S. Agencies that mentor, advise, or train the unit
National Criminal Investigation Service (SERNIC)	DEA

Table 24: Pakistan

Host Country Unit	U.S. Agencies that mentor, advise, or train the unit
Antinarcotics Force/Special Investigation Cell	DEA

Table 25: Panama

Host Country Unit	U.S. Agencies that mentor, advise, or train the unit
Sensitive Investigations Unit	DEA
Transnational Criminal Investigative Unit	HSI
National Border Service Anti-Narcotics Directorate	DEA
Port Task Force	DEA, HSI, and CBP/CSI

Table 26: Peru

Host Country Unit	U.S. Agencies that mentor, advise, or train the unit
Peruvian National Police Aviation Unit	INL
Peruvian National Police Money Laundering Unit	INL
Peruvian National Police Antinarcotics Unit	INL

Table 27: Philippines

Host Country Unit	U.S. Agencies that mentor, advise, or train the unit
Philippine National Police, Anti-Cyber Group	HSI
Philippine National Police, Anti-trafficking in Persons Division	HSI
Philippine National Police, Operations Management Division	HSI
Philippine National Police, Admin and Resource Management Division	HSI
Philippine National Police, Luzon Field Unit	HSI

National Bureau of Investigations, International Operations Division	HSI
National Bureau of Investigations, Cyber Crime	HSI
National Bureau of Investigations, Digital Forensics Lab	HSI

Table 28: Tanzania

Host Country Unit	U.S. Agencies that mentor, advise, or train the unit
Drug Control and Enforcement Agency (DCEA)	DEA

Table 29: Thailand

Host Country Units	U.S. Agencies that mentor, advise, or train the unit
Royal Thai Police – Narcotics Suppression Bureau (RTP-NSB)	DEA
RTP-NSB (North)	DEA

Table 30: Vietnam

Host Country Unit	U.S. Agencies that mentor, advise, or train the unit
Ministry of Public Security, Counternarcotics Police Department	DEA, INL