

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes



UNODC

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Letter From the Chairs

Welcome to HMUNC 2023!!! My name is Tina Pathak and I am one of your chairs for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes Committee. I have been in MUN for two years and believe it is one of the most fundamental and memorable experiences I will ever have. Apart from the numerous conferences I have attended, MUN has been so much more than just an extracurricular. It has allowed me to form a more confident outlook on life and my public speaking abilities in general. The friendships I have formed throughout my time at MUN have been the best part of it all. If I ever go to pretty much any state I can find a friend which is great :) Last year I was able to chair an amazing committee about Greek Mythology and it was such a fun and memorable experience which I know this year's MUN will be!! Apart from MUN, I love to write and read but am also a big music fan. I jump around from 70s music to new rap/rnb like the Weekend, Khalid, and Brent Faiyaz. I'm a big car fan (shout out to my dream 1973 Camaro). Most importantly, my favorite activity is running around New York with my friends looking for the next place to explore. I hope to see all of you on the committee and have a memorable HMUNC 2023!

Welcome to HMUNC!! My name is Aymaan Reddy and I'm a junior at Herricks. I've been a part of MUN for almost a year and a half now and am glad I decided to join and participate as much as I did this year. I've had the opportunity to attend multiple conferences, both high school and college. I decided I was going to join MUN last year as a delegate in HMUNC because of how fun the conference was. Besides my MUN experience and activities, I enjoy playing sports like basketball and football and also running a small photography/videography business. I just recently started getting paid for my work and it's been an exciting experience. Taking pictures and videos of cars is one of my favorite types of photos/videos to take. My dream car to do a photo and video shoot on and to own would be a Ford Shelby AC Cobra. When I'm not doing any of these things, I also love listening to music. My favorite artists are Drake ⁶ and J. Cole. I'm excited to see what you all do in committee, remember to have fun!

Welcome to HMUNC '23!!! My name is Isabella Mathai and I am currently a junior at Herricks. I have been a part of MUN for about 2 years and had the opportunity to chair last year's conference. MUN has become something I am very passionate about because it has helped me tackle my fear of public speaking and because I genuinely love to debate about world topics. The club is not only where I met some of my best friends, but it is where I made some of the most memorable memories that I know I will cherish forever. Outside of MUN, I love to spend time with my friends and family, listen to music (especially SZA, The Weeknd & Frank Ocean ) , and am a food connoisseur (WAWA 4LIFE)! I hope you will all enjoy our simulation of UNODC and I look forward to meeting you all + being your chair at HMUNC this year!!!!



Wishing you all the best, Tina Pathak, Aymaan Reddy, and Isabella Mathai

How to Use this Guide

Dear delegates,

This is the background guide for the United Nations Office on Drug and Crimes (UNODC) at HMUNC 2023. As your chairs, we have spent a lot of time writing and gathering research to create the best possible guide for you, in hopes that it will aid you in your research and debate. We hope that you take some time to read this, as it'll provide a helpful guideline to the topics you will be discussing in debate as well as the potential solutions you may propose. This background guide should serve as one of the many sources you should utilize to conduct your research in preparation for our conference!

This background guide is filled with important information and subtopics that you may use in debate, and it provides delegates with a holistic understanding of topics. In your position paper, you must include why your country thinks these issues are important, how you have already tried to solve the problems, and what possible solutions you may use to make the world a better place and minimize the problem. This background guide will help you understand the basic ideas of the issues, and it is your job to be creative and figure out different solutions. As a delegate, this guide should be used to learn and solidify knowledge about drug trafficking and the opioid crisis. It will also bring into light what is required for attending this conference along with what period and topics will be discussed. To aid you with your process of writing a position paper and finding solutions, we will have questions to consider at the end of every topic as well as descriptions of your position at the end of the background guide! We look forward to hearing the ideas you bring to the table! Good luck!

We cannot wait to see you in committee!

Sincerely,
Tina Pathak, Isabella Mathai, and Aymaan Reddy

Our Committee Email: unodc.hmunc@gmail.com



How to Write a Position Paper

We ask that you submit at least ONE position paper on the UNODC to be considered for awards. Position papers should be no longer than one page in length and must have footnotes in MLA format for all sources used.

Paragraph 1:

- Quote important documents and information regarding the UNODC committee.
- Use the background guide to familiarize yourself with the topic and why the issue is important to the UNODC committee.
- Explain why this issue is important and should be addressed.

Paragraph 2:

- Research more to find your character's position/beliefs and what they have done to address these specific issues.
- Use the position guides listed at the end of the background guide to help you.
- What is your character's stance on the topic? What characters has your character worked with in the past and what characters may it be looking to work with in the future?
- You can include quotes from your character, bills that your character has supported, and other information about your character to justify your position.

Paragraph 3:

- Come up with creative ideas that will help either solve or minimize this issue. What possible actions can we take?
- Remember to propose solutions relative to your character's view and bloc (a bloc is a group of delegates that share similar ideas).
- At the bottom of each topic, we have added questions to consider to help you find creative and thoughtful ideas.
- Make sure to write about what your country would like to accomplish in this committee.

Position Papers must be emailed to: unodc.hmunc@gmail.com

By May 15th



What is UNODC?

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes is a specialized committee founded in 1997 and headquartered in Vienna, Austria. The founding treaty of the UNODC is the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, adopted in 1988.¹ UNODC is in charge of dealing with the drug crisis. Additionally, the UNODC addresses corruption and terrorism in the context of illicit drugs and other illicit activities. Throughout this committee, we will discuss ways to address the impact that drugs and crime have on society, drug trafficking methods and routes, and potential solutions to reduce drug usage and related crime.

Topic A: Drug Trafficking

Drug Trafficking and UNODC

Drug trafficking is the illegal (or felonious) trade of controlled substances, such as heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamine, through international borders. It involves the production, transportation, and distribution of drugs, along complicated and refined criminal networks. Drug trafficking is one of the biggest illicit markets in the world, with an estimated global value of \$32 billion.

Drug trafficking is a global concern that endangers safety, security, and public health. This committee is the primary organization responsible for combating this issue at an international level. The UNODC uses different measures to handle drug trafficking, such as the promotion of worldwide co-operation by law enforcement, the development of evidence-based policies and programs, and the offering of legal assistance to countries interested in implementing UN treaties for drug control.²

¹“UNTC.” *UNTC*, 1990, https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=VI-19&chapter=6. Accessed 8 May 2023.

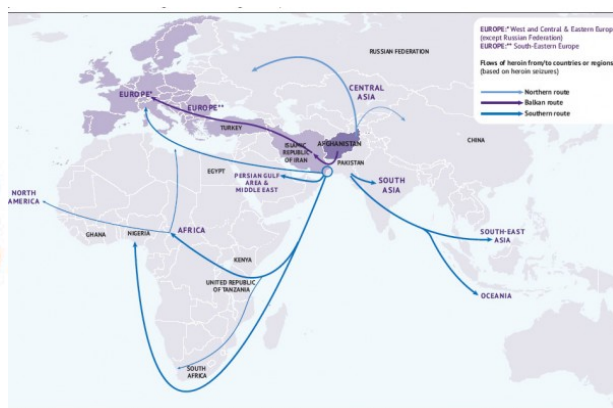
²“UNODC and the response to drugs.” UNODC, www.unodc.org/lpo-brazil/en/drogas/index.html. Accessed 7 May 2023.

The 2021 World Drug Report found that the production and trafficking of synthetic drugs, such as fentanyl and methamphetamine, has steadily increased in recent years. In addition, the cultivation of opium poppy and coca leaf, which are used to produce heroin and cocaine, respectively, has remained stable at high levels.³

Drug trafficking has immense negative impacts on society, including expanded rates of drug addiction, violence, and crime. It also undermines legal authorities and contributes to corruption and government fragility in many nations.

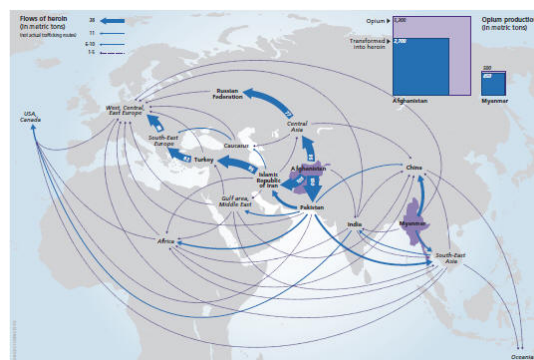
Drug Trafficking Routes and Methods

According to the UNODC, there are several established drug trafficking routes, as well as emerging routes that have become more prevalent in recent years.



One of the most established drug trafficking routes is the "Balkan route," which runs from Afghanistan through Iran, Turkey, and the Balkans, and into Western Europe. The route is primarily used to

transport heroin (a type of opioid), with the Balkan region serving as a key transit point for the drug. The UNODC reports that drug traffickers often use complex smuggling methods, such as hiding drugs in fuel tanks or inside furniture, to evade detection.⁴



³ "World Drug Report 2021." *unodc*, 2021, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/wdr2021.html>. Accessed 8 May 2023.

⁴ "Drug Money: the illicit proceeds of opiates trafficked on the Balkan route." *unodc*, https://www.unodc.org/documents/rpanc/Publications/other_publications/Balkan_route_web.pdf. Accessed 8 May 2023.

The “Southern Route” begins in Afghanistan and runs through India, Pakistan, and Southeast Asia to reach the New Zealand and Australian markets. This route is mainly used to transport heroin, but traffickers have begun transporting other drugs, such as methamphetamine. The UNODC has reported that this region has become a major hub for synthetic drugs as traffickers are using new and creative methods, such as smuggling drugs through commercial shipping containers and even frozen fish.⁵

The “Northern Route” begins in Afghanistan and runs through Central Asia to reach Russia and Europe.⁶ This route is primarily known to transport heroin, with traffickers hiding the drugs in clothing or in the cavities of vehicles to evade detection. Over the past couple of years, this route has become crucial for drug smugglers as the demand for drugs in Russia and Eastern Europe has increased.



In addition to these routes, the UNODC reports that other routes have become more prevalent in recent years. Two of these routes are known to be the “West African Route,” which runs from South America through West Africa and into Europe, and the “Pacific Route,” which runs from South America through the Pacific Islands, and into Australia and Asia.⁷ Both routes are mainly used to transport cocaine (a stimulant drug), and traffickers smuggle the drug through shipping containers and hollowed-out logs.

Types of Opioids:

Opioids are a class of drugs used for pain relief. They help to bind opioid receptors in the brain, spinal cord, and other parts of the body. This can help reduce the sensation of pain:

1. Oxycodone: a semi-synthetic opioid that is often prescribed for people dealing with moderate to severe pain. Highly illegal drug, if not prescribed, and being sold rapidly on the black

⁵ “Untitled.” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, June 2015, https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/Afghan_opiate_trafficking_southern_route_web.pdf. Accessed 8 May 2023.

⁶ *Transnational Organized Crime in the Fishing Industry*. https://www.unodc.org/documents/congress//background-information/Human_Trafficking/Issue_Paper_-_TOC_in_the_Fishing_Industry.pdf.

⁷ *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*. https://www.unodc.org/res/wdr2021/field/WDR21_Booklet_4.pdf.

- market. Fake oxycodone is very difficult to spot and this can lead to a multitude of issues.
2. Cocaine: NOT AN OPIOID DRUG. It is a stimulant drug that affects the central nervous system. This produces a feeling of euphoria, increases energy, and alertness. Cocaine does not bind the opioid receptors since it is not an opioid but does affect the levels of dopamine and creates a pleasure or rewarding feeling in the brain.
 3. Fentanyl: a synthetic opioid that is used in medical settings, usually during a surgery or for pain management in patients with cancer. This can be illegally manufactured and is on the rise for causing death rates through its synthetic use and manufacturing
 4. Methadone: a synthetic opioid that is used in the treatment of opioid addiction. It can help reduce withdrawal symptoms and cravings for other opioids.

The UNODC is trying to make it harder for traffickers to move drugs around the world by improving law enforcement agencies' ability to detect and investigate trafficking activities, as well as strengthening border controls. Collaboration between nations is crucial to be able to appropriately and effectively address this issue and accomplish the mission of UNODC.

Drug Trafficking and Technology

Many drug traffickers thrive in the age of new technology and use it to improve their routes and



supply chains. The use of technology by drug traffickers poses a significant problem to global security. One of the biggest ways drug traffickers use technology is through online drug marketplaces. Although these marketplaces are operating on the web, standard web browsers cannot access them because

they operate on the dark web. These drug marketplaces allow drug traffickers to conduct their operations anonymously⁸ Drug traffickers utilize technology by using encrypted communications, coded messages that are unreadable to anyone who doesn't know how to decrypt them. Using encrypted communications, drug traffickers can communicate with one other without fear of being caught by law enforcement.⁹

Drug traffickers use technology to escape law enforcement. For example, they use GPS devices to detect where law enforcement officers are stationed (i.e their car movement) to avoid detection and carry

⁸ US government accountability office. "Trafficking: Use of Online Marketplaces and Virtual Currencies in Drug and Human Trafficking." *GAO*, 14 Feb. 2022, www.gao.gov/products/gao-22-105101. Accessed 16 Apr. 2023.

⁹ "FBI's Encrypted Phone Platform Infiltrated Hundreds of Criminal Syndicates; Result is Massive Worldwide Takedown." *Department of Justice*, 8 June 2021,

out drug trafficking activities where police presence is low.

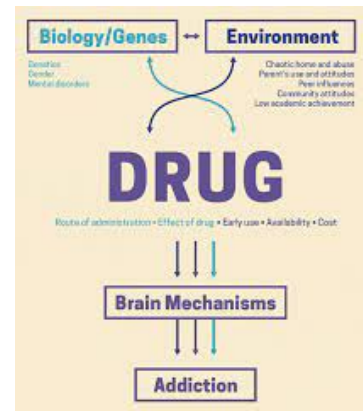
¹⁰Additionally, drug traffickers use drones to transport drugs to areas inside and outside the borders of the country of origin since transporting drugs by road is difficult and costly.



Drug traffickers also use **Cryptocurrencies**, digital currencies that use encryption communication to transfer funds and generate currency. By using this method of payment, drug traffickers can wire money without leaving a paper physical trail. This makes it hard for law enforcement to track their financial activities. ¹¹

Impact on Society

Drug trafficking harms individuals, but also undermines the security and stability of the entire communities where it occurs. This specific form of trafficking is usually associated with criminal activities that consist of extortion, money laundering, and organized crime. Drug trafficking also has been shown to increase violence and crime overall in many countries, increasing robberies, assaults, and homicides. ¹²




Drug Trafficking and Public Health

The use of illegal drugs causes a vast amount of health problems including but not limited to addiction, drug overdoses, and transmission of infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS and hepatitis. Drug use and related illnesses create a massive strain on healthcare systems as well as the obvious harm they bring

¹⁰ <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdca/pr/fbi-s-encrypted-phone-platform-infiltrated-hundreds-criminal-syndicates-result-massive>. Accessed 8 May 2023.

¹¹ "As Virtual Currency Use in Human and Drug Trafficking Increases, So Do the Challenges for Federal Law Enforcement." *GAO*, 24 February 2022, <https://www.gao.gov/blog/virtual-currency-use-human-and-drug-trafficking-increases-so-do-challenges-federal-law-enforcement>. Accessed 8 May 2023.

¹² US Department of Justice. "Impact of Drugs on Society." US Department of Justice National Drug Intelligence Center, www.justice.gov/archive/ndic/pubs38/38661/drugImpact.htm#:~:text=The%20economic%20cost%20alone%20is,lost%20productivity%2C%20and%20environmental%20destruction. Accessed 27 Apr. 2023.



to individuals. This results in higher healthcare costs and access to healthcare becoming much more limited to those who really need it. ¹³

Drug Trafficking and Corruption

Another significant impact of drug trafficking is the erosion of governance and the rule of law. Drug trafficking is often associated with corruption, as traffickers bribe public officials and law enforcement officers to turn a blind eye to their activities. This undermines the trust of citizens in their government and institutions and can lead to a breakdown in the rule of law. The UNODC reports that corruption associated with drug trafficking can also hinder economic development and prevent investment, further exacerbating the problems faced by affected communities. ¹⁴

Drug Trafficking and the Environment

Drug trafficking also harms the environment. The production of illicit drugs usually involves the usage of toxic chemicals and can lead to environmental degradation and harm to local ecosystems. This is because of the materials used to make these drugs as well as the way they are produced (i.e. the making of meth produces toxic gasses that can lead to air pollution). The UNODC reports that the production of drugs such as cocaine and heroin has led to significant deforestation in some parts of the world, threatening the biodiversity of these regions. ¹⁵

Drug Trafficking and the Economy

Additionally, drug trafficking also has detrimental economic consequences. The UNODC reports that drug trafficking is usually related to informal economies, which leads to reduced tax revenues and the

¹³ “Public health dimension of the world drug problem.” *World Health Organization (WHO)*, 25 April 2022, https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA75/A75_43-en.pdf. Accessed 8 May 2023.

¹⁴ “DEA Museum Presents! Illegal Drugs and the Environment.” *DEA Museum*, 6 June 2022, <https://museum.dea.gov/news/dea-museum-presents-illegal-drugs-and-environment>. Accessed 8 May 2023.

¹⁵ “DEA Museum Presents! Illegal Drugs and the Environment.” *DEA Museum*, 6 June 2022, <https://museum.dea.gov/news/dea-museum-presents-illegal-drugs-and-environment>. Accessed 8 May 2023.

displacement of legitimate businesses. Drug trafficking also leads to lower amounts of foreign investment and hinders economic development, particularly in countries where drug trafficking is prevalent.¹⁶

What Has Been Done?

In response to these challenges, the UNODC is working with its partners to develop comprehensive strategies to address the problem of drug trafficking. This includes strengthening law enforcement and border control measures, as well as improving access to healthcare and drug treatment services. The organization is also working to promote alternative development programs to provide sustainable economic opportunities to communities affected by drug trafficking.¹⁷

The UNODC produces [the World Drug Report](#) annually, which provides an overview of



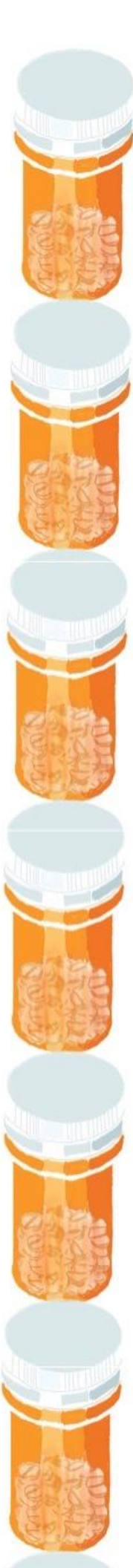
circumstances regarding drugs worldwide. It measures drug use, tracks human trafficking, and also helps move towards opioid-related addiction cures. The evidence and data that comes from these reports help develop policies that address drug usage and can help establish programs for those who need it.

Additionally, the UNODC encourages the implementation of drug treatment and rehabilitation facilities based on evidence. One of the most impactful initiatives implemented by the UNODC is the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. This convention was adopted in 1988 and has been ratified by 190 countries. This convention laid down the framework for international collaboration to combat drug trafficking and hopes to reduce the supply and demand for illicit drugs.¹⁸

¹⁶ "How Illicit Drug Use Affects Business and the Economy." *Obama White House*, January 2017, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/ondcp/ondcp-fact-sheets/how-illicit-drug-use-affects-business-and-the-economy>. Accessed 8 May 2023.

¹⁷ UNODC. "Drug Trafficking: a \$32 billion business affecting communities globally." *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, www.unodc.org/southasia/frontpage/2012/August/drug-trafficking-a-business-affecting-communities-globally.html. Accessed 27 Apr. 2023.

¹⁸ UNODC. "UNODC and the response to drugs." *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, www.unodc.org/lpo-brazil/en/drogas/index.html. Accessed 27 Apr. 2023.



The UNODC has supported programs to reduce the demand for these drugs. Notably, the UNODC supported a pilot program in Mexico, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The objective of this program is to address illegal transactions, including drug trafficking, with government officials and the private sector.¹⁹ The UNODC also supports drug prevention and treatment programs, and educational programs aiming to reduce drug-related crimes overall. Furthermore, the UNODC has contributed to improving law enforcement cooperation and provides assistance to countries that need to minimize drug usage and attempt to prevent drug-related crimes by supplying funding and additional resources on a need basis.

Despite these efforts, drug trafficking remains a significant problem. According to the UNODC's World Drug Report 2021, global drug use continues to rise, with an estimated 275 million people having used drugs in 2020.²⁰

Questions to Consider:

1. How can we as a committee come together to implement preventive measures to stop the use of the black web in drug trafficking?
2. What incentives could we potentially offer to drug traffickers for them to stop the illicit trade of drugs? (i.e. allowing them to use their knowledge of the dark web to get jobs/whistleblowers)
3. Think economically? How will countries with fragile economies supported by drug trafficking be able to move forward without this drug trading dependency?
4. What kind of technology would be needed to combat drug trafficking and how can it be retrieved to achieve the goal of minimizing trafficking and drug-related crime?

¹⁹ "UNODC supported Pilot Initiative for Mexico UNTOC review process begins its activities." UNODC, 12 May 2022, www.unodc.org/unodc/frontpage/2022/May/unodc-supported-pilot-initiative-for-mexico-untoc-review-process-begins-its-activities.html. Accessed 7 May 2023.

²⁰ "UNODC World Drug Report 2021: Pandemic Effects Ramp up Drug Risks, as Youth Underestimate Cannabis Dangers." *United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime*, https://www.unodc.org/unodc/press/releases/2021/June/unodc-world-drug-report-2021_-pandemic-effects-ramp-up-drug-risks--as-youth-underestimate-cannabis-dangers.html.

5. Would reaching out to big pharmaceutical companies and possibly forming an agreement be a viable option to help prevent and track drug abuse? (i.e. Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson, Merck & Co, etc.)

Topic B: Opioid Crisis

The Opioid Crisis

One of the pressing issues that the UNODC is currently dealing with is the **opioid crisis**. An



opioid is a prescribed painkiller that is used to treat unbearable pain. However, opioids are being illegally manufactured and sold on the streets, as well as on the

dark web and leading to deaths on a massive scale. This crisis started in the late 1990s in the United States when pharmaceutical companies began aggressively marketing prescription opioids as a non-addictive solution to chronic pain. This led to a rapid rise in the number of prescriptions for opioids, which led to widespread abuse of these drugs. Over time, the crisis has worsened and spread to other countries around the world.²¹

The opioid crisis is predominantly caused by the over prescription and misuse of prescription painkillers, such as fentanyl, oxycodone, and hydrocodone.²² These drugs are known to be highly addictive, and people who become addicted usually turn to illegal drugs such as street fentanyl and heroin even when the pain they had experienced was gone.




According to the World Health Organization, it has been estimated that over 53,000 people died from an overdose in the United States alone, just in 2020.²³ Furthermore, the crisis significantly increased the cost of health care, the rise of criminal activity, and the loss of productivity. The impact of this urgent issue has been felt across the world. For example, In Canada, approximately 17,000 people have died from opioid-related overdoses between the years of 2016 and 2020. In Europe, there has been a massive increase in opioid-related deaths, due to the emergence of fentanyl which is more widely known to be easily cured and more potent than other opioids.²⁴

²¹ “Understanding the Opioid Overdose Epidemic | Opioids | CDC.” *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/opioids/basics/epidemic.html>. Accessed 8 May 2023.

²² “Understanding the Opioid Overdose Epidemic | Opioids | CDC.” *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, 2019, <https://www.cdc.gov/opioids/basics/epidemic.html>. Accessed 8 May 2023.

²³ “Opioid Overdose.” *World Health Organization*, World Health Organization, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/opioid-overdose>.

²⁴ “Synthetic Opioid Overdose Data.” *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 6 June 2022, <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/deaths/synthetic/index.html>.



A study that was conducted by the UNODC found that the opioid crisis has an outstanding economic impact as well. This study found that the total economic cost of opioid-induced deaths in the United States alone was about \$504 billion in 2015, which was 2.8% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).²⁵

Overprescription of Opioids:


The overprescription of opioids by healthcare providers is one of the major causes of the opioid crisis. Based on a faulty representation of the science, pharmaceutical companies market opioids to doctors as safe and effective for treating common chronic pain as opposed to extreme pain related to cancer treatment and surgery. This led to an explosion in the number of prescriptions for these drugs. However, opioids are very addictive and even doctors misunderstood the magnitude to which these drugs can impact the course of a patient's life. Many become dependent on it and that is because of doctors and pharmacists miscommunication and consumers' lack of information. When their prescriptions run out or are no longer available, they turn to illegal drugs like heroin and fentanyl which are cheaper and easier to obtain. At the same time, the more opioids an addict consumes, the higher the dose they need to not be in constant pain.

Illegal Distribution of Opioids:

The illegal distribution of opioids has also contributed to the opioid crisis. Certain drug trafficking organizations distribute and produce synthetic drugs, such as fentanyl, which are cheaper to produce than other drugs, but much more dangerous.²⁶ This has resulted in the rise of deaths caused by overdoses. Many people who use this dangerous drug do not realize its severity, which in most cases leads to accidental overdoses. Furthermore the lack of treatment is also contributing to this crisis. Many people

²⁵ Response to the Opioid Crisis." *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes*, www.unodc.org/unodc/en/opioid-crisis/index.html. Accessed 28 Apr. 2023.

²⁶ "New, Dangerous Synthetic Opioid in D.C., Emerging in Tri-State Area." *DEA.gov*, 1 June 2022, [https://www.dea.gov/stories/2022/2022-06-01/new-dangerous-synthetic-opioid-dc-emerging-tri-state-area](https://www.dea.gov/stories/2022/2022-06/2022-06-01/new-dangerous-synthetic-opioid-dc-emerging-tri-state-area). Accessed 8 May 2023.



who struggle with addiction do not have the proper resources or treatment options, such as behavioral therapy and medication-assisted treatment (MAT). This lack of treatment can lead to a rise in overdose and continued drug abuse. The lack of access to treatments can come in the form of long waiting periods, a lack of variety in treatment methods, and even unaffordable costs. Overall, the lack of services leads to more people being rendered helpless to their addictions, regardless of what they would like to do about it.

Possible Solutions

The numerous efforts to address this ongoing crisis include stricter prescription guidelines passed by the UNODC for healthcare providers, public awareness campaigns, and treatment. The UNODC has also addressed this crisis through its Global Programme on Drug Demand Reduction, which aims to reduce the demand for illegal drugs and promotes evidence-based treatments (primarily for drug use disorders).²⁷

One of the main strategies that the UNODC has been promoting in recent years is the use of evidence-based practices to help treat and prevent opioid addiction.²⁸ These practices include the use of medication-assisted treatment (MAT) and the enactment of harm-reduction strategies. MAT involves the use of certain medications (to treat opioid dependence) such as naltrexone, buprenorphine, and methadone to treat this addiction. Harm reduction strategies include the use of clean syringes and needles to reduce the spread of diseases like hepatitis C and HIV.

In terms of medication-assisted treatments, studies have shown that the use of medicals such as buprenorphine and methadone can reduce the effects of opioids, the use, and overdose related deaths. It also showed improved retention in treatment programs. The UNODC has worked to increase access to

²⁷ “Drug Demand Reduction Introduction.” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, 2021, <https://www.unodc.org/ropan/en/DrugDemandReduction/drug-demand-reduction-introduction.html>. Accessed 8 May 2023.

²⁸ “Medication-Assisted Treatment: Buprenorphine in the HCH Community.” *National Health Care for the Homeless Council*, 2019, <https://nhchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/policy-brief-buprenorphine-in-the-hch-community-final.pdf>. Accessed 8 May 2023.

these medications around the world, specifically in countries where opioid related deaths are high. This means low to middle income countries where this access to treatment may be inundated and limited.

Furthermore, the UNODC has also been working towards increasing public awareness of the harmful



effects of opioid addiction through media, governments, and civil society organizations in order to promote the need for treatment and prevention services. In 2018, the UNODC launched the Opioid Strategy to combat the rise of opioids. As the crisis continued, the UNODC created the Synthetic Drug Strategy in 2021. The UNODC's synthetic drug strategy includes four types of action:

multilateralism, health responses, early warning, and counter narcotic interventions. All of these ideas can be found in **the UN Toolkit on Synthetic Drugs** and are aimed to prevent opioid overdoses at any stage. The UNODC will implement these strategies worldwide by increasing advanced drug analysis, increasing safety when handling drugs, implementing training on cryptocurrency/the darknet, and equipping frontline officers with the correct methods to identify a drug.²⁹

What Has Been Done?


The UNODC has the resources needed to encourage international collaboration and assist nations in their attempts to reduce drug abuse and further contain drug-related crime. **UNODC's goal is to create healthier lives and promote healthy practices which result in a better quality of life.** The UNODC

THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC BY THE NUMBERS



launched the **Global Smart Initiative** in 2016 which assists law enforcement agencies as they work against drug trafficking and other drug-related crimes through new software tools and databases that recognize and

org/. Accessed 7 May 2023.



analyze criminal activity patterns. This led to the increase in collaboration between multiple law enforcement agencies and much more efficient intelligence obtainment by these respective agencies.³⁰

The Global Programme for the Implementation of the Doha Declaration reinforces criminal justice systems worldwide. This declaration was first called for in 2015 and consisted of a neutral approach to drug control which included prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and law enforcement. This program has resulted in increases in a standardization for fighting back against drug abuse and drug-related crimes.

The UNODC launched a campaign in 2020 reaching worldwide. This campaign, dubbed “**Listen First,**” directly reaches out to youth and warns them of the dangers that are drug abuse and addiction. This campaign furthers their actions by encouraging positive life choices and increasing support for actions that prevent drug usage.³¹

Questions to consider:

1. What is there to be done for people that are already addicted to opioids?
2. What are some programs that have been implemented to combat the opioid crisis?
3. How can we expand on UNODC initiatives and further collaborate to increase their impact, specifically their effectiveness?

³⁰ “Response to the Opioid Crisis.” *United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime*, www.unodc.org/unodc/en/opioid-crisis/index.html.

³¹ Agt. “Doha Declaration Global Programme.” *Global Programme*, <https://www.unodc.org/dohadeclaration/>.

Position Description:

United States:

Drug trafficking has severely impacted the opioid crisis and as a result, affected the United States in a negative way as well. Overprescribing of prescription drugs and opioids has resulted in a sharp increase in addiction rates, drug overdose deaths, and abuse of opioids no matter if they are legal or not. Opioids were present in 69,000 of the 93,000 drug overdose deaths in the US which clearly shows opioids are a root cause of drug overdose deaths in the US as they make up more than 70% of them. The opioid crisis has caused a significant toll on healthcare resources and law enforcement agencies which causes many people on a variety of scales to have social and economic struggles that come alongside this crisis.



Mexico:

The country of Mexico has taken a significant impact due to the opioid crisis and drug trafficking overall as well as things like economic instability, corruption, and a great deal of violence mainly because of the country's role as a major transit country for drugs, which are mainly made up of opioids. The rise of organized crime due to these issues is detrimental to the state of the nation and has given drug cartels control of the drug market

overall which also increases the number of homicides and violent crimes. The opioid crisis directly contributes to more addiction rates, overdose rates, and the transmission of HIV & other diseases through the usage of injected drugs. Though the government has attempted to address the drug trafficking problem by increasing law enforcement involvement and encouraging economic opportunities that are non-drug and crime related. Still, the issue has been ongoing and may be extremely harmful for the country of Mexico and its residents if actions aren't taken.

Colombia:

Colombia has been affected by drug trafficking and the opioid crisis heavily as well. The nation is a big producer and exporter of drugs, mainly cocaine. These circumstances have led to the presence of corruption and violence in the country for years. Drug trafficking and production have caused mass displacement of local communities within the country, a mass increase and spread of organized crime, and local governments being crippled and being rendered powerless to the issues that are present in the country. Moreover, the opioid crisis has hit Colombia which led to the rising consumption of synthetic drugs such as fentanyl. This is mixed with other substances which also increases overdose risk. The Colombian government has



attempted to put a stop to drug trafficking, but the country has not made much progress and continues to struggle with these issues to date.

India:



Drug trafficking and the opioid crisis' effects have been present in India in a different way than in a majority of the countries. India is a transit point for drug trafficking from the nations Afghanistan, and Myanmar. This caused an increase in drug addiction and abuse, especially in urban youth groups. Overprescription of painkillers and opioids is the driving cause of the opioid epidemic, specifically in India. This also led to more drug overdose deaths. The government has taken steps to combat the

drug issue, yet the problem retains its devastating effects and continues its damage. A lot of solutions will be necessary to solve the nation's problems.

United Kingdom:

The UK has been impacted by the opioid crisis and the drug trafficking issue including significant increases in opioid-related deaths. This is due to the easy access to cheap, potent drugs like fentanyl. This drug has been a key component of this country's drug trade. Organized crime groups are the main cause of smuggling drugs like cocaine and heroin into the country. The opioid crisis also increases the frequency of drug-related crimes. This also has a damaging effect on emergency and healthcare services. The UK government has tried to enforce laws and policies that attempt to combat the issue, yet the problem persists today.



Afghanistan:



Drug trafficking and the opioid crisis have greatly affected Afghanistan. Being one of the biggest producers of opium in the world, Afghanistan has played a crucial role in the global drug trade. However, this has resulted in widespread addiction and social issues within the country. The opium trade has fueled corruption and violence, and addiction rates have soared among Afghans. Furthermore, the Taliban have benefitted from the opium trade by using the profits to finance their insurgency. As a result, drug trafficking and the opioid crisis have had a

devastating impact on Afghanistan and its people, worsening pre-existing social and economic issues in the country.



China:

China has been heavily affected by drug trafficking and the opioid crisis. The illegal drug trade has created a large demand for opioids in the country, and China has been struggling to prevent the influx of these dangerous drugs. To combat drug trafficking, the Chinese government has imposed strict laws and regulations, with harsh punishments such as the death penalty for those found guilty of drug-related offenses. Despite these efforts, the opioid crisis continues to pose a serious threat to the health and well-being of the Chinese population, leading to

addiction and related health problems. Additionally, drug trafficking has also increased crime rates and social instability in some areas. China is actively working towards finding effective solutions to this pressing issue.

Dominican Republic:

The Dominican Republic situated in the Caribbean is a major trading location for drug trafficking. The Dominican Republic, because of its situation, is a bridge between Europe and the United States for the drug trade of cocaine and heroin. This bridge has proved to be disastrous to the Dominican Republic as a whole creating violence, corruption, and social instability. This has made the Dominican Republic one of the most violent nations in the Latin American region. Additionally, the opioid crisis has contributed to the country's problems. There is an increasing number of individuals becoming addicted to prescription painkillers as well as other opioids. This has caused many overdose-related deaths and has caused a strain on the Dominican Republic's healthcare systems. The government has taken measures and implemented policies to help address the issues but, drug trafficking and the opioid crisis are both still serious and significant problems in the Dominican Republic.



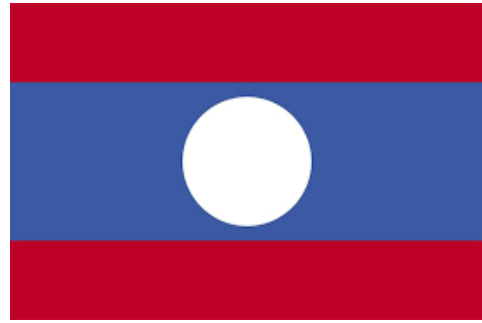
Thailand:

Thailand has been a major trading point for multiple drugs including heroin, meth, and fentanyl. This has increased the levels of addiction in Thailand as well as drug-related crimes. Although there are strict drug laws in place in Thailand, drug trafficking and drug use are both still major issues in Thailand. These drug laws include the death penalty for drug trafficking. Branching off of the high addiction rates, Thailand has also had a major problem with

drug addiction. The opioid crisis has led to an increase in synthetic opioid usage leading to even more opioid-related deaths. Thailand's people and economy have been devastated by both the opioid crisis and drug trafficking.

Laos:

Laos is situated in Southeast Asia. This particular region of the world is known for extremely high levels of poppy production which eventually becomes opium. Laos is usually a country where drug trafficking occurs often and it is used as a center for drug traffickers. This is because of its penetrable borders which makes it easy for drug traffickers to come in and out transporting their drugs as they go. This has caused drug usage and subsequent addiction to increase. Many people are now dependent on opioids and opium both of which are detrimental to our health. The opioid crisis has had a major impact on Laos' economic development and countries social improvements. Although there have been many advancements in Laos to help citizens become less dependent on these drugs, it still proves to be a large issue.



Guyana:

Although Guayana is a very small country, it is a major trading bridge between South America, the Caribbean, and North America. This has caused an increase in drug addiction especially related to drugs like heroin and fentanyl, both of which are opiates. This has caused increased crime rates, health problems, and social problems. There has been little change in terms of stopping drug trafficking but there is still hope for the

future.

Canada:

Canada has seen shocking numbers in recent years of drug-related deaths. The number of deaths caused by opioids is over 17,00 since 2016. Many opioids in Canada are obtained illegally and are often from black markets or drug trafficking organizations. There has also been a prevalence of powerful synthetic opioids like fentanyl which has caused the situation to become worse in the growing years. The opioid crisis has overwhelmed healthcare systems in Canada and has filled hospitals and addiction treatment centers. There is too high of a demand for the services those buildings and centers can offer. Canada has taken steps to address this issue like increasing funding to harm reduction programs and law enforcement but there's more to be done in the future.



Bolivia:

Bolivia has been extremely affected by drug trafficking and the opioid crisis. Bolivia is a major producer of coca leaves which are used in the production of cocaine. Bolivia has found it very



hard to manage the illicit drug activities that are occurring within its country's boundaries. Opioids are extremely accessible to those in Bolivia and because of it, the availability and usage of opioids is increasing which is leading to crimes, health issues, and addiction. The Bolivian government has implemented measures to solve these issues like increasing drug seizures and promoting alternative crops to coca farming. The drug trade also impacts Bolivia's economy and social stability, fueling corruption and violence.

Brazil:



Brazil serves as a transit point to move drugs from South America to the US and Europe. This has made Brazil a dangerous place with drug trafficking increasing crime rates, decreasing productivity, and putting a strain on public resources. There has also been a rising number of opioid addictions and overdose cases. There has also been another pressing issue—Brazil's own opioid crisis. Despite improving addiction treatment and increasing law enforcement, the problems still remain.

Nigeria:

Nigeria serves as a trade point between South America, Europe, and other parts of the world. This has led to drug abuse and addiction, especially in the young population. There is easy availability and accessibility for opioid usage and purchase throughout. The easy availability of opioids like tramadol and codeine has further worsened the opioid crisis in Nigeria. Even though the Nigerian government has tackled issues with tightening border controls and a crackdown on illicit drugs, the problems are persistent.



Philippines:

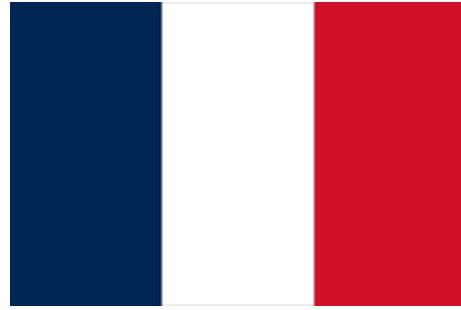


The Filipino government's anti-drug campaign has been criticized for the killing of multiple individuals suspected of being involved in drug-related activities. A plethora of economic issues, such as unemployment and poverty have heavily contributed to the country's increasing drug problem. The opioid crisis has further caused the situation as there has been an increase in the availability of affordable drugs, leading

to overdose and addiction. While the government may have taken action to further help solve the crisis, such as implementing drug rehabilitation programs, there is still more that needs to be done to identify the prevalent causes of drug abuse in the country.

France:

Overdoses and drug-related deaths have increased significantly as trafficking networks have used France as a hub, resulting in more crime and violence. To combat these issues, the government implemented numerous measures such as mandating more aggressive law enforcement efforts and increasing funding for treatment. However, drug trafficking and addiction are still very present in the country causing significant challenges and having devastating effects on its communities.



Indonesia:

Despite having strict drug laws with serious consequences, such as the death sentence, Indonesia has been heavily impacted by the opioid crisis and drug trafficking. The country's open borders have made it significantly easier to smuggle illicit drugs into the country, resulting in very serious drug abuse issues. An increase in incidents of addiction and overdose has been seen as a result of the opioid epidemic, which has made the problem worse. Though the Indonesian government has started awareness campaigns and has made addiction treatment services more

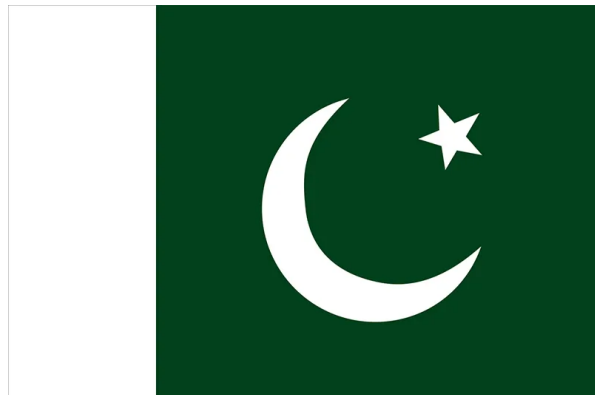
available, trafficking and drug use in the country is still a very serious issue that many Indonesians are facing.



Pakistan:

Pakistan is known as a transit route for drugs from Afghanistan and neighboring countries. The availability of low-cost opioids in the country has caused addiction rates to increase significantly, particularly among vulnerable groups such as laborers and street children. The healthcare system is under pressure from the soaring number of opioid-related death and health issues.

Drug trafficking has fueled crime and violence in the country, with criminal networks and cartels engaging in illegal activities. The drug trafficking and opioid crisis have had numerous negative effects on the country's economy, public health, and social fabric.



Singapore:



To help combat drug trafficking and opioid addiction, Singapore has implemented strict laws and rules. In reality, Singapore has one of the lowest rates of drug addiction in the world. The government has enforced severe penalties for drug-related crimes, including the death penalty. Drug usage and trafficking have been successfully controlled because of the country's strict laws and enforcement procedures.

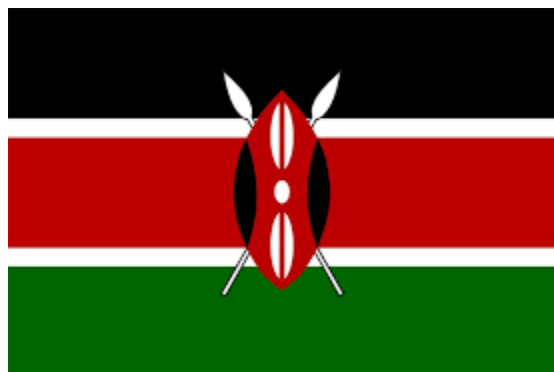
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Peru:

Peru is one of the biggest producers of the coca leaves needed to make cocaine, which resulted in the opioid crisis having a major impact on the country. In rural regions, where coca production is common, the drug trade has fostered immense corruption and bloodshed. The transportation of illicit opioids like fentanyl, through the country has also boosted drug-related activities in the country as well. The economic and social stability of the nations has been adversely affected by this problem, which has placed pressure on the healthcare and justice systems.



Kenya:



Drug trafficking and the opioid crisis have had significant negative effects on Kenya. The country is a transit point for drug traffickers smuggling drugs from Asia and the Middle East to Europe and the Americas, resulting in increased drug abuse and addiction among the Kenyan population. This has led to a rise in crime and social problems. The opioid crisis has hit the country hard, with the number of opioid-related deaths increasing in recent years. Lack of access to healthcare and treatment facilities has made it difficult for those struggling with addiction to get help. Moreover, drug trafficking and the ensuing corruption have contributed to instability in the country, further hindering its

economic and social development. Overall, Kenya and its people have suffered devastating consequences due to drug trafficking and the opioid crisis.

Somalia:

The opioid crisis and drug trafficking have had an immense impact on the country exacerbating the nation's already existing issues with violence, hunger, and poverty. Somalia is a transit country due to its weak law enforcement and administration. As a result, addiction and drug abuse, particularly among young people, have become a widespread problem throughout the nation. Additionally, the opioid crisis has worsened as many people abuse drugs in order to navigate the difficulties in a country that is embroiled in war.



Venezuela:




Both economically and socially, drug trafficking and the opioid crisis have had a significant impact on Venezuela. Venezuela has traditionally been a popular transit nation for drug trafficking because of its open borders and location. Many Venezuelans now rely on drug trafficking as a source of income as a result of the country's financial crisis. The country has also been impacted by the opioid epidemic, with numerous addictive substances being smuggled in through Venezuela causing serious health problems. Additionally, the increase in drug trafficking has increased violence and crime, which has made the

country's instability worse. Despite the government's efforts, there is still a big problem with drug trafficking that has to be addressed.

Russia:

Russia has faced the highest levels of drug addiction in the world. Opioids are commonly abused in Russia as well as other illegal drugs such as heroin and cocaine. This has also led to a surge in death rates as more and more Russians use opioids and other illegal and illicit drugs on a daily basis. Additionally, organized crime is associated with drug crimes and has seen a major increase in the past decades. This has destabilized Russia's social and economic structure. The government has taken measures to control this more including,





increasing border security and cracking down on drug trafficking rings but there is still more to be done.

Sudan: Sudan is known to be a hotspot for drug smugglers because of its strategic location at the crossroads of prominent drug trafficking routes. As a result, this has led to the increase of the growing opioid crisis in the country, with illicit drugs such as tramadol and heroin becoming more available. This has caused a surge in addiction and health problems such as HIV and hepatitis. The Sudanese government has taken steps to combat this issue by increasing security measures and honing down on smuggling operations, but there is still much work to be done like addressing underlying causes of drug addiction, such as limited access healthcare, poverty and lack of education.

Chile: Chile is a country that has not been extremely impacted by the opioid crisis when compared to its neighboring countries, but, the drug trafficking problem remains a corner. Chile is located on the route used by drug traffickers to transport drugs from Colombia to other parts of South America. The government of Chile has implemented strict measures to control drugs coming into the country. In recent years, there have been many drugs taken by law enforcement agencies. Although the opioid crisis has not yet reached the levels seen in other parts of the world, Chile is still watchful of this epidemic and will continue to try to prevent its spread.

Guatemala: Guatemala has been dealing with drug trafficking and the opioid crisis. The country is at a location of drug trafficking routes from South America to the United States which is why it is at a key transit point. The drug trade has allowed for corruption, violence, and organized crime to happen throughout the country. The opioid crisis has been driven by the availability of cheap heroin and fentanyl. This has caused a surge in overdoses and deaths in Guatemala. The government has taken measures to combat this including increasing law enforcement and providing more resources for recovering addicts. These efforts have been crushed by limited resources and government corruption. However, there is still hope for the future.

Argentina: In recent years, Argentina has seen a major problem with drug trafficking with drug cartels using the country to smuggle drugs such as marijuana and cocaine. As a result, there has been an increase in corruption and violence, and traffickers are competing for control of the market, as well as bringing the government to turn a “blind eye” to illegal activities that are being conducted. Argentina has also been subject to the opioid crisis, with a rise in abuse to drugs. This has led to an increase in overdose death and has put the country's healthcare in jeopardy. The government has taken strategies to combat these issues, such as prodigy addiction treatment services and increasing law enforcement efforts.

Ecuador: Ecuador is a country that has been impacted by both drug trafficking and the opioid crisis. The country is located between the largest cocaine producing countries (Colombia and

Peru). This makes it a transit point for drug trafficking. This has led to drug-related violence and corruption in the country . The government has tried to increase law enforcement efforts and cooperation in international organizations but the country still faces issues when addressing these issues.

