



ON CERTAIN ISSUES REGARDING COUNTERING ILLICIT DRUG TRAFFICKING

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ABSTRACT

The article analyzes the problems associated with the illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs, their analogues, psychotropic substances, as well as the causes of their occurrence and ways to solve them.

The current drug situation in our republic remains serious and is objectively assessed by the country's leadership as one of the main threats to the security of individuals, society and the state. On 3 November 2025, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, reviewed a presentation of proposals aimed at protecting the nation's gene pool from drug addiction, improving the effectiveness of the fight against cybercrime, and digitizing the system of prosecutorial oversight. He noted that "Since the start of the year, more than 11,000 drug-related offences have been detected and around 2.5 tonnes of narcotic substances have been seized. Every year, new forms and methods of drug-related crime emerge and their reach is growing, which underscores the need for urgent and comprehensive measures to combat drug-related crime and drug addiction." [1]

Based on a comprehensive approach to this issue, the Head of State issued Decree № 207 of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 3 November 2025 "On comprehensive measures for the effective protection of public health and the nation's gene pool from drug addiction and drug-related crime", which sets out the objectives of this Decree, one of which is "to establish large-scale operational, search and investigative activities aimed at identifying routes for the importation of narcotic drugs across the Republic's borders, the distribution of such drugs via the internet, illegal drug laboratories and drug-trafficking networks, including the officials who protect them, to suppress their activities and ensure that punishment is inevitable." [2]

The danger to society posed by the non-medical use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances is determined not only by the rise in the number of crimes linked to their illicit trafficking and the increase in the number of drug addicts—which already poses a threat to the population's gene pool—but also by the growth of organized criminal groups involved in drug trafficking.

The illicit trafficking of drugs is a problem not only for individual regions and countries, but also for the modern world as a whole. The spread of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances poses a real threat to public health, has a negative impact on the demographic situation, and contributes to the erosion of cultural, moral and universal human values in society. Problems associated with illicit drug trafficking are acutely felt by all countries without exception and have a negative impact on their social, cultural, economic and political development.

It must be emphasized that the illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances is understood to mean their import (export) into the Republic of Uzbekistan, transit, storage, dispensing, sale, distribution, acquisition, transport, forwarding, development, production, manufacture, use, destruction, as well as the cultivation of drug-containing plants, carried out in breach of the conditions and procedures established by the legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan. [3]

It is also worth noting that our country's geographical location has attracted heightened interest from the international drug mafia in the Republic of Uzbekistan, both as a vast sales market and as the least risky transit route for the illegal delivery of drugs through our republic's territory. The high level of concealment of offences in the sphere of illicit drug trafficking is facilitated by the shared interest of drug dealers and users in concealing these facts, and by the use of modern telecommunications to cover up these crimes. [4]

It should be taken into account that the level of professionalism and organization of crimes committed by drug traffickers is constantly increasing. Such criminal activities are often carried out with the use of substantial natural raw material resources, specialized equipment in clandestine laboratories, and with the involvement of professional pharmacists, chemists, and researchers engaged in the production of various types of narcotic substances.

It should also be emphasized that the high degree of danger associated with the spread of narcotic drugs, their analogues, and psychotropic substances is determined not only by the serious harm they cause to human health, resulting in the loss of social functions by affected individuals, but also by a number of other related factors. Drug-dependent individuals may become a contributing factor to criminal activity, since, for various reasons, including employment-related difficulties, not everyone has sufficient financial resources to purchase drugs. As a result, some individuals resort to criminal means as the only available way to obtain them.

The fact that young people are becoming increasingly involved in drug trafficking, and that educational institutions and places where young people gather for leisure are increasingly becoming venues for drug distribution, poses serious challenges for the law enforcement agencies of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

In recent years, the fight against illicit drug trafficking has reached a new level. This is evidenced by the organization and establishment of new units and services to combat illicit drug trafficking, both domestically and at the international level. At the same time, as practice shows, the specific nature of international drug trafficking is constantly and dynamically evolving, which, in turn, requires law enforcement agencies to review and revise previously proposed methods and recommendations.

Given the scale of the threat posed by illicit drug trafficking, the Customs Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan is taking measures to ensure the security of the state's borders,

paying particular attention to providing customs posts with the necessary resources and means to combat illicit drug trafficking, equipping customs posts with the latest technologies for detecting contraband (including narcotic drugs), establishing a unified information system that brings together all agencies involved in combating drug trafficking, thereby improving the efficiency of the exchange of relevant information and reducing the time taken to transmit data.

It should be borne in mind that the creativity and ingenuity demonstrated by some drug traffickers are often limitless, and in many cases technical detection devices and service dogs prove to be ineffective. In such circumstances, the professional competence and operational experience of customs officers become particularly important, representing one of the most effective methods for detecting drug smuggling.

Therefore, in addition to applying specialized customs control measures, customs authorities increasingly focus on operational and analytical methods of countering illicit activities, including the implementation of profiling systems and the development and practical application of operational-search training for personnel.

The Customs Committee conducts extensive work aimed at studying the best practices of leading foreign countries in this field, facilitating the exchange of practical and theoretical knowledge among officers, organizing official missions to European countries, and assisting in the preparation and implementation of training programs and conferences on relevant issues in this area. Such cooperation is based on international agreements and treaties. Through cooperation with foreign counterparts, the customs authorities of the Republic of Uzbekistan have gained significant experience in combating drug smuggling in recent years, as evidenced by the results of detected cases involving narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

The focus of such cooperation is placed on preventing the supply of narcotic drugs, their analogues, and psychotropic substances, including the identification of criminal business schemes, determining potential routes and border crossing points in transit countries, as well as tracing the acquisition and distribution of illicit substances and the laundering of proceeds obtained from the sale of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. During such meetings, particular attention is also given to the introduction of innovative technologies, the establishment of specialized funds, and the allocation of financial resources for combating drug smuggling. These technologies and mechanisms are designed to analyze the movement of cargo and commodity flows, identify risk groups, and subsequently serve as a basis for conducting inspections and implementing special measures aimed at disrupting drug smuggling channels.

Summarizing the above, it should be emphasized that the effectiveness of countering narcotic drugs, their analogues, and psychotropic substances, as well as the detection and suppression of drug smuggling, largely depends on the experience and professional qualifications of law enforcement officers, their knowledge of the specific methods used to transport narcotic drugs, their analogues, and psychotropic substances across the customs border of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and their ability to conduct timely and effective operational-search activities aimed at their detection and suppression. It is evident that the future of the country largely depends on the effectiveness of efforts to combat illicit drug trafficking. In this regard, ensuring a high level of cooperation among all law enforcement agencies, both within the Republic of Uzbekistan and with international organizations, is of particular importance, thereby implementing the principle of inevitability of punishment for unlawful acts committed.

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