UNODC
STUDY GUIDE

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Letter from the Secretariat

Dear Delegates,

It is with great honor and enthusiasm that I welcome you to ITUMUN 2025, where innovation, diplomacy, and collaboration come together to shape a brighter future. As Secretary-General, it is my privilege to witness the incredible passion and dedication each of you brings to this conference.

For this year's ITUMUN, we challenge you to think beyond borders and redefine the possibilities of multilateral cooperation. As a university rooted in engineering and technical excellence, we have embraced our unique identity by curating committees and agendas that emphasize industrial development, technological advancement, and critical technical issues. Whether debating economic policies, grappling with emerging technologies, or navigating historical turning points, you will be tasked with crafting solutions that not only address the challenges at hand but also inspire progress.

Model United Nations is more than just an academic exercise—it is a platform for you to develop critical thinking, refine your communication skills, and foster a spirit of teamwork. This conference is your opportunity to step into the shoes of world leaders, embracing the responsibility and influence that comes with these roles.

On behalf of the entire ITUMUN team, I wish you the best of luck in your preparations and during the conference itself. We are here to support you every step of the way, ensuring that your ITUMUN experience is both impactful and unforgettable. I look forward to seeing the energy and ideas you bring, and the lasting connections you will forge throughout this journey.

Warm regards,

Roya Alhariri
Secretary-General
ITUMUN 2025

Letter From the Chairboard

Dear Delegates,

 As the Committee Board of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) committee, we welcome you to the committee with immense gratitude for the ITUMUN'25.

 We are Bengs İlban, a senior student from Bahçeşehir University with double bachelor's degrees in English Language Teaching and Sociology; and Dilay Örüng a student from RWTH Aachen University with an electrical engineering and information technologies major. Emre Tahmaz is the committee's Academic Assistant and we are pleased to serve you as your committee board. Our agenda items, the Intersection of Public Health and Drug Policy and the Role of Social Media & Cryptocurrencies, with the committee itself are crucial regarding the daily global challenges we observe. We have tried our best to prepare a beneficial guide for such issues. We want to remind you that the guide you will read will give you general information. For detailed information personal research is critical. We expect you to address the importance of cooperation and challenge differences.
   We encourage all delegates to come prepared, engage actively, and collaborate with fellow delegates to make ITUMUN'25 a memorable and enriching experience. Your passion, commitment, and innovative ideas are essential in achieving the committee's goals and positively impacting the world.

 Lastly, I extend my sincere gratitude to Secretary-General Roya Alhariri and the organizers of this conference for their determined efforts. Their dedication and hard work allowed us to *bee united* and engage in meaningful discussions on urgent global issues.

 I wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at ITUMUN'25, let's bee united!

 Kindest Regards,
 Bengs İlban, Emre Tahmaz
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1. Introduction to the Committee: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) was established in 1997 through the merger of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division. Tasked with addressing a broad spectrum of transnational issues, the UNODC plays a central role in combating challenges related to illicit drugs, organized crime, terrorism, and corruption. Through its global presence and partnerships with Member States, international organizations, and civil society, the UNODC facilitates comprehensive approaches to complex issues that threaten international peace, security, and development.

The primary mission of the UNODC is to assist Member States in upholding the rule of law, promoting criminal justice reforms, and enhancing the capacities of national institutions to address emerging threats. To achieve this, the UNODC focuses on evidence-based research, normative work, and technical assistance programs tailored to regional and local contexts. Its guiding frameworks include the United Nations Conventions on Drugs and Crime, such as the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and the Convention against Corruption.

In tackling global drug challenges, the UNODC emphasizes a balanced approach that integrates demand and supply reduction strategies. The office advocates for policy interventions that prioritize human rights, public health, and sustainable development, aligning its efforts with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. By fostering international cooperation and advancing innovative solutions, the UNODC aspires to create a safer, healthier, and more just world for all.

2. Introduction to the Agenda Item I: The Intersection of Public Health and Drug Policy: Strategies for Harm Reduction.

The intersection of public health and drug policy represents a critical challenge for governments and international organizations. Traditional punitive approaches to drug use have often exacerbated public health crises, leading to increased rates of overdose, the spread of infectious diseases, and social marginalization of drug users. Harm reduction strategies, by contrast, aim to minimize the negative health, social, and legal impacts associated with drug use without necessarily reducing drug consumption.

Harm reduction recognizes that drug use exists in every society and that eradicating it is unrealistic. Instead, it seeks to create policies and interventions that prioritize the health, dignity, and rights of individuals. From supervised injection sites and needle exchange programs to drug checking services and naloxone distribution, harm reduction offers evidence-based solutions that save lives and improve public health outcomes.

As the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) works to address global drug challenges, the integration of harm reduction into national and international drug policies has emerged as a vital agenda item. Balancing public health priorities with legal frameworks requires innovative strategies that align with human rights and sustainable development goals.

3. Key Terminology

Community-Based Rehabilitation: A specific method of dependence rehabilitation that provides sustainability and accountability for community health.

Drug Courts: Specialized court programs designed to help participants recover from drug dependency and reduce future criminal activity.

Naloxone Distribution: Specific programs in high-risk communities focus on the distribution of Naloxone, a safe medicine that reverses opioid overdoses.

Needle and syringe Exchange Programs: These programs aim to prevent the spread of infectious diseases by providing clean injecting equipment and safe disposal facilities.

Opioid Substitution Therapy (OST): Medical procedure involving the substitution of opioids with oral medicine that minimizes withdrawal.

Supervised Consumption Sites: Safe and clean facilities where people can bring their drugs and use them in the presence of trained staff to prevent overdoses and the

spread of infectious diseases. Such facilities provide drug use equipment, education, emergency medical care, and testing for infectious diseases.

4. Focused Overview

Harm reduction strategies address the adverse consequences of drug use without relying solely on criminal penalties. These approaches prioritize evidence-based interventions and public health over punitive measures, emphasizing the following:

1. Health-Oriented Interventions: Strategies such as needle exchange programs, opioid substitution therapy (e.g., methadone or buprenorphine), and supervised consumption facilities reduce the spread of infectious diseases like HIV and hepatitis C and lower overdose deaths.
2. Decriminalization of Drug Use: Decriminalizing personal drug possession shifts the focus from law enforcement to health care, reducing the stigma surrounding drug use and encouraging individuals to seek help.
3. Education and Prevention: Providing accurate information about drug use, harm reduction practices, and safer consumption methods empowers individuals and reduces risks associated with drug use.
4. Social Support Services: Addressing the social determinants of health, such as housing, employment, and mental health, is critical to ensuring long-term recovery and harm reduction success.

Despite growing support for harm reduction, significant barriers remain. Many countries continue to prioritize punitive approaches, influenced by political, cultural, or religious factors. Additionally, limited funding for harm reduction programs and stigmatization of drug users hinder progress. International organizations like the UNODC play a crucial role in promoting harm reduction as a cornerstone of drug policy reform.

5. Major Parties Involved

1. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC):

As the lead UN body addressing global drug challenges, the UNODC advocates for a balanced approach that integrates public health with law enforcement. It supports member states in implementing harm reduction strategies through technical assistance, policy development, and capacity building.

2. World Health Organization (WHO):

The WHO emphasizes harm reduction as a critical component of public health, particularly in preventing infectious diseases and reducing drug-related mortality. Its guidelines on opioid substitution therapy and overdose prevention are widely regarded as international benchmarks.

3. Member States Implementing Harm Reduction:

- Portugal: Decriminalized drug possession in 2001 and adopted a public health approach, leading to significant reductions in overdose deaths and HIV infection rates.
- Switzerland: Pioneered harm reduction through supervised injection sites and heroin-assisted treatment, demonstrating the effectiveness of such programs.
- Netherlands: Combines harm reduction with decriminalization, offering needle exchange programs and drug checking services.

4. Countries Opposed to Harm Reduction:

Nations with strict prohibitionist policies, such as the Philippines and some Gulf states, resist harm reduction approaches, often prioritizing punitive measures over public health.

5. Civil Society Organizations:

- Harm Reduction International (HRI): Advocates for evidence-based harm reduction policies worldwide.
- International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC): Promotes drug policies grounded in public health and human rights.
- Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF): Provides harm reduction services in areas affected by conflict or limited healthcare access.
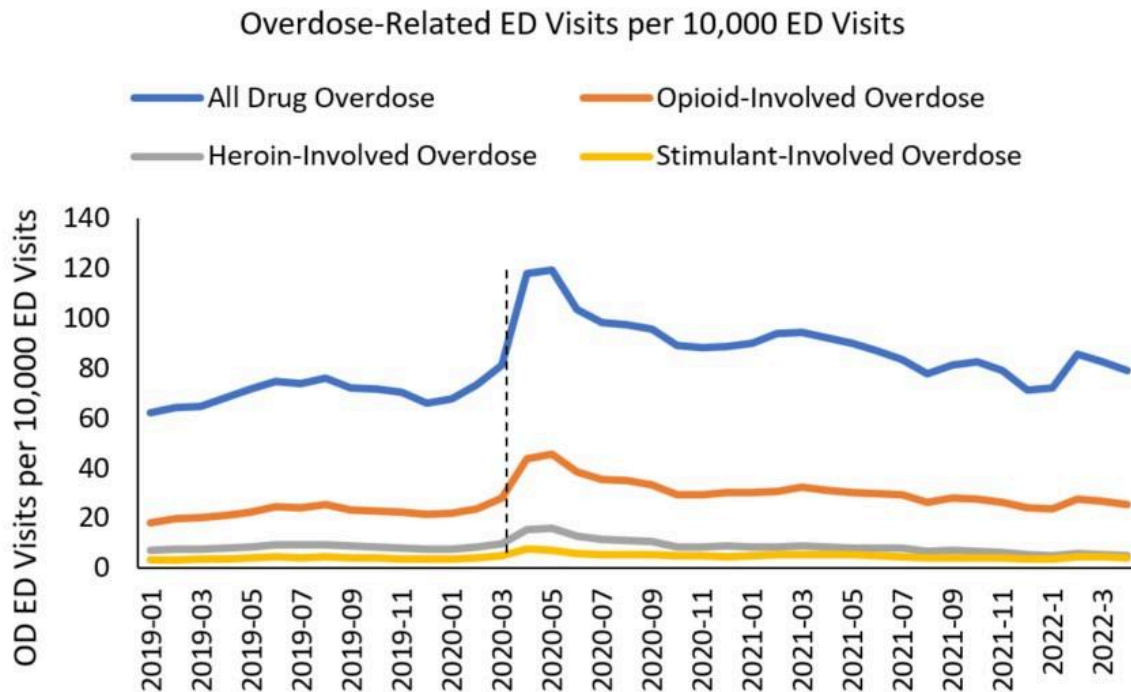
6. Regional Bodies:

- European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA): Monitors drug use trends and supports harm reduction policies in Europe.
- African Union (AU): Recently endorsed harm reduction strategies to address drug use in Africa, though implementation varies across member states.

7. Global Advocacy Networks:

Initiatives such as the Global Commission on Drug Policy and the Open Society Foundations advocate for global harm reduction strategies, highlighting their impact on public health and human rights.

This structured approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the agenda item, aligning with the objectives of the UNODC and emphasizing the importance of harm reduction in global drug policy reform.

(Figure 1: Overdose-Related Emergency Visits)

6. Points to be Addressed

1. Public Health and Drug Use: Understanding the Connection

- The impact of drug use on public health systems (e.g., spread of infectious diseases, overdose deaths).
- The role of harm reduction in addressing health crises linked to drug use, such as the HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C epidemics.
- Addressing the mental health challenges associated with drug use and addiction.

2. Principles of Harm Reduction

- Defining harm reduction and its key principles: public health focus, evidence-based interventions, and respect for human rights.
- Differentiating harm reduction from punitive and abstinence-based approaches.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of harm reduction in reducing drug-related harms (e.g., needle exchange programs, supervised consumption sites).

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

- Balancing public health approaches with existing legal frameworks on drug control.
- Reviewing the role of international treaties, such as the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, in shaping national drug policies.
- The impact of decriminalization and legalization on public health outcomes.

4. Addressing Stigma and Social Marginalization

- Reducing the stigma surrounding drug use to encourage access to health services.
- Integrating harm reduction services into mainstream healthcare systems.
- Promoting the dignity and rights of people who use drugs (PWUD).

5. Evidence-Based Harm Reduction Strategies

- Overview of successful harm reduction programs, including:
- Needle and syringe exchange programs.
- Opioid substitution therapy (e.g., methadone and buprenorphine).
- Naloxone distribution for overdose prevention.
- Supervised drug consumption facilities.
- Incorporating drug-checking services to ensure safety.
- Addressing gaps in access to harm reduction services in underserved communities.

6. Addressing the Socioeconomic Determinants of Drug Use

- The role of poverty, unemployment, and inequality in exacerbating drug use.
- Integrating harm reduction strategies with broader social support services (e.g., housing, education, and employment programs).
- Developing targeted interventions for vulnerable populations, such as women, youth, and indigenous communities.
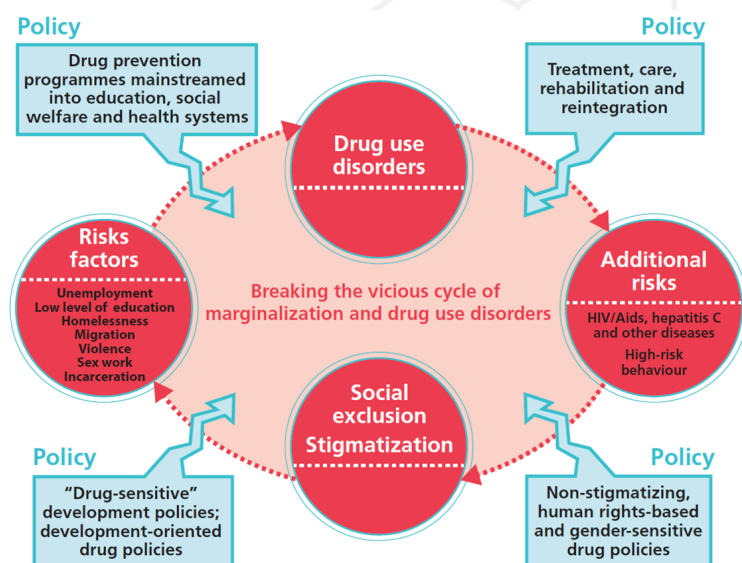
7. Prevention and Education

- The role of public awareness campaigns in reducing drug-related harm.
- Implementing school-based and community-based education programs.
- Encouraging safer drug use practices through accurate and accessible information.

8. Funding and Resource Allocation

- Challenges in securing adequate funding for harm reduction programs.
- Exploring public-private partnerships to support harm reduction efforts.

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- Prioritizing harm reduction in national budgets and international aid programs.

(Figure 2: Cycle of drug use disorders)

9. Regional and International Collaboration

- Enhancing cooperation among countries to share best practices in harm reduction.
- Strengthening the role of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), World Health Organization (WHO), and other international organizations.
- Addressing cross-border challenges, such as drug trafficking and the spread of infectious diseases.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Developing metrics to measure the success of harm reduction programs.
- Using evidence-based research to inform policy decisions.
- Ensuring accountability in the implementation of harm reduction strategies.

11. Challenges to Harm Reduction Implementation

- Political, cultural, and religious resistance to harm reduction.
- Addressing the lack of trained professionals and infrastructure for harm reduction services.
- Overcoming the challenges of integrating harm reduction with law enforcement efforts.

12. Emerging Trends and Innovations in Harm Reduction

- The use of technology in harm reduction, such as mobile apps for overdose prevention or virtual counseling for addiction.
- The role of cannabis and psychedelic therapies in harm reduction and addiction treatment.
- Exploring alternatives to incarceration, such as drug courts and community-based rehabilitation.

13. Vulnerable and Marginalized Populations

- Developing harm reduction strategies for people in conflict zones and humanitarian crises.
- Addressing the needs of incarcerated individuals with substance use disorders.
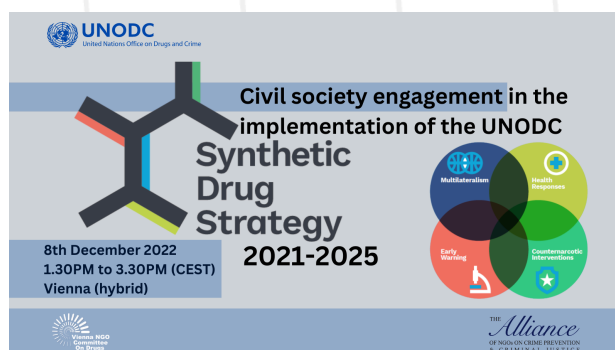- Gender-sensitive harm reduction approaches for women and LGBTQ+ individuals.

14. The Role of Civil Society and Advocacy Groups

- Empowering grassroots organizations to provide harm reduction services.
- Advocacy for policy changes to integrate harm reduction into national drug strategies.
- Mobilizing community engagement and peer-led harm reduction initiatives.

15. Future Directions for Global Drug Policy

- Incorporating harm reduction into sustainable development goals (SDGs).
- Transitioning from punitive to health-based drug policies.
- Aligning harm reduction strategies with global human rights frameworks.

These points can guide committee discussions and resolutions, ensuring a comprehensive approach to addressing the public health dimensions of drug policy and harm reduction.

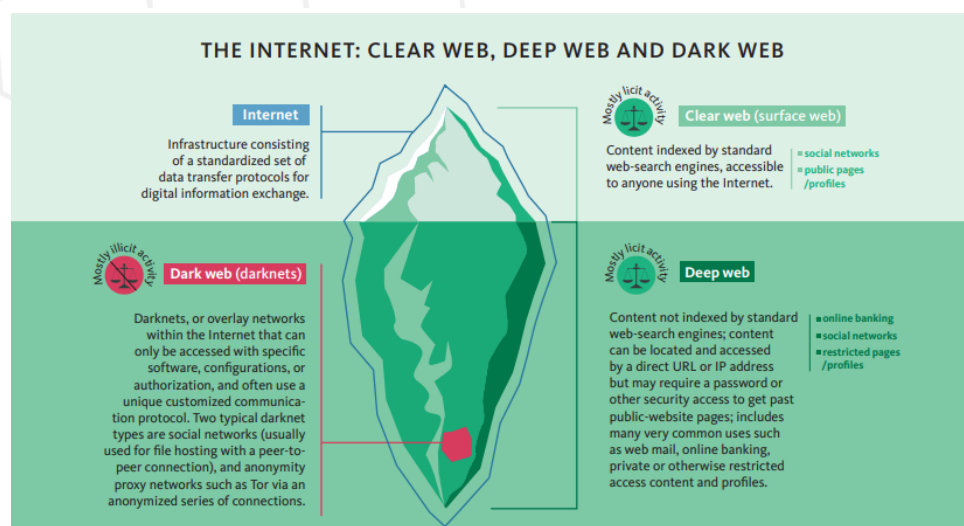
(Figure 3: Society engagement organization by UNODC)

1. Introduction to the Agenda Item II: Drug Trafficking in the Digital Age: The Role of Social Media and Cryptocurrencies.

The rapid advancement of digital technology has transformed nearly every aspect of our society, including criminal activity. Among other things, the drug trade has evolved in a way that cannot be predicted, taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the digital era. Social Media platforms and cryptocurrencies (Bitcoin, Altcoin &, etc.) have emerged as important tools for drug and substance traffickers, allowing the illicit drug market to achieve unprecedented efficiency, reach, and anonymity.

Social media platforms were originally designed to connect people, but are increasingly being used as tools to recruit, communicate and advertise illicit substances. Drug traffickers use encrypted messaging, hidden groups, unknown apps, and algorithmic advertising loopholes to target potential buyers, particularly vulnerable populations such as teenagers. These platforms often allow drug traffickers to evade traditional law enforcement methods, as their global reach and lack of strict attention make identifying and dismantling criminals' complex networks difficult.

At the same time, the appearance of cryptocurrencies has opened a new avenue for financial transactions in the illicit substance trade. Cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin and Monero (a type of altcoin that cannot be traced through transactions) enable anonymous and decentralized payments, disturbing efforts to track and intercept drug-related financial flow. The dark web, which operates and functions beyond the reach of traditional law enforcement agencies, has become a marketplace for the circulation of illicit drugs, with cryptocurrencies serving as the primary means of payment.

This evolving landscape poses major challenges for international law enforcement agencies, policymakers, and regulators. The transnational peculiarity of the problem requires coordinated and innovative solutions to fight drug trafficking while maintaining the legitimate use of digital technologies. Striking this scale is further complicated by the possibility of human rights violations, particularly with overly restrictive or surveillance-based countermeasures.

(Figure 4: Depth of the internet)

2. Key Terminology

Anonymity Tools: Technological tools such as Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) that conceal users' IP addresses and encrypt their online activities.

Blockchain: Record of the transactions made in cryptocurrencies, secured by end-to-end encryption.

Cryptocurrencies: A variety of digital currencies, used as an alternative form of payment and investment.

Dark Web (Darknets): Encrypted networks accessible through specific software or authorizations with increased levels of security, anonymity, or censorship resistance. They can be used for both legitimate and illegal reasons, but often utilized for the latter because of the anonymity and untraceable features.

Data Mining: Process of analyzing large data sets to discover patterns and useful information.

Deep Web: Hidden parts of the internet that can not be reached by anyone.

End-to-End Encryption: Secure communication systems accessible by only communicating users.

Know Your Customer Protocol: Process of verifying client's identity.

Virtual Asset Service Providers (VASPs): A person or an organization able to operate and exchange virtual assets on behalf of another person.

3. Current Situation

Illicit activities such as drug trafficking have existed for a long time. With the rise and development of the online world, these activities took another form and evolved into online crimes. Laws and regulations under the internet evolved to include illegal online activities. Currently, international and regional laws, operations, and discussions take place. As a result of arrests and operations, millions of USD worth of illicit substances, firearms, and cryptocurrencies were captured. In order to analyze the data mining of such cryptocurrencies, new improvements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning were used.

3.1 Technological Advancements in Drug Trafficking

The landscape of illicit drug markets has changed dramatically nowadays as a result of advancements in technological use in drug trafficking which have enabled traffickers to operate with greater efficiency and anonymity. This employment of new technologies has challenged law enforcement agencies and authorities at regional and international levels. The emergence of digital platforms such as the darkweb and other encrypted communication sites has made drug trafficking operations smaller in risk and larger in precision. Social media platforms have been used to raise advertising, anonymity in darknet markets and cryptocurrencies enable traffickers to utilize an array of tools to advance their operations with minimum exposure. In addition, advancements in AI and machine learning have begun being used by traffickers, creating an arms race of technology aimed at counteracting illicit drug trafficking.

3.1.1 Online Platforms and Darknet Markets

Illegal drug sales have become more anonymous due to the rise of darknet markets, accessible through encrypted networks like Tor. These platforms have the capability of increasing privacy and lowering chances of detection by the usage of cryptocurrencies for conducting payments. Darknet markets, which are accessed via encrypted networks, have created virtual marketplaces where buyers and sellers can conduct transactions with a certain amount of anonymity to shield both buyers and sellers from being detected. Such platforms operate just like legal e-commerce platforms, with user ratings, product descriptions, and even support, making the trade in drugs more organized and accessible.

With the establishment of the Silk Road in 2011 by Ross Ulbricht, it became one of the first to combine Bitcoin and Tor, setting a precedent for drug transactions for subsequent markets, marking a turning point in the evolution of online drug markets. Although U.S. authorities closed Silk Road in 2013, its spread has continued, with more recent markets streamlining security and user interface.

Other darknet markets provide significant advantages for traffickers, those of which include:

Anonymity: The interactions are highly encrypted which makes them untraceable and thus minimizing the risk of being caught by authorities.
Global Reach: Traffickers have more access to customers worldwide beyond geographical constraints considering its an online platform.
Financial Security: The utilization of cryptocurrency in such a case allows for new levels of untraceable and secretive payment transactions.

Even though these websites and platforms are creating epic challenges for law enforcement, governments are increasingly utilizing their own advancements in technology, such as Artificial Intelligence and blockchain analysis technology, to track these transactions and networks. However, the struggle of building cases against these illicit activities remains a global challenge.

3.2 Scale and Impact in Digital Drug Markets

The scope of the illicit online drug markets has seen an exponential increase, with darknet sites and social media platforms supporting billions of dollars worth of illegal transactions each year. The markets have not only expanded the availability of drugs but also made the drug trade a globalized digital economy.

Darknet markets allow traffickers to transcend earlier geographical constraints, creating a web of globalized consumers and sellers. The size of the transactions has made it challenging for law enforcement authorities to seize all operations, with new marketplaces consistently emerging to fill the gaps of those closed.

The following could be considered to be the major impacts of online drug markets:

Ease of access and fewer risks - Illegal drug transactions have been made easily accessible to consumers without requiring the risk of face-to-face contact. Online sites eliminate the need for in-person trades, limiting contacts with law enforcement and authorities, making it safer for sellers and consumers, thus causing widespread illegal activity.

Wider reach for Sellers - Both small and large scale dealers can penetrate beyond the regional or local lever, reaching worldwide markets and consumers which causes major prevalence of dangerous substances.

Increased variety of product available - Consumers pose a risk to themselves by the varieties of drugs available that are not locally accessible, like synthetic drugs and laced varieties that could be lethal.

These markets have severe effects that reach much wider than illegal buying and selling but also the heightened drug use rates, the economic loss that member states are exposed to due to unregulated trade, and heightened public health crises as a result of greater accessibility to dangerous substances.

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3.3 Social Media's role in Recruitment and Transactions

Social Networking sites that are widely used everyday, especially by a younger demographic, have slowly and unexpectedly become useful tools for drug traffickers to recruit individuals and coordinate their sales and have been known to conduct their marketing of their products as well. Social media drug trafficking impacts all age groups, but adolescents and young adults are particularly susceptible given their high-rates of social media usage. These social platforms offer an immediacy, and traffickers can connect with consumers with extreme ease and speed.

The most commonly seen methods of Recruitment and Marketing of drug traffickers on social media are as follows:

1. **Hashtags and Codewords:** The usage of special codewords and signals in hashtags in the advertising of drugs often target younger audiences and make it easy to find when looking for illegal substances.
2. **Encrypted Direct Messaging:** Private messaging features on social media apps facilitate one-on-one communication, ensuring discretion in transactions.
3. **Community Engagement:** Some dealers infiltrate online communities, gaining trust and targeting specific groups.

Social media poses many challenging conditions for law enforcement in countering drug trafficking. With their rapid turnover of content and encrypted instant messaging, these platforms complicate efforts to identify suspicious activities. New algorithms based on artificial intelligence are intended to counter these innovations.

3.4 Cryptocurrency and Decentralized Finance: Anonymity and Security

Cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin, Monero, and Ethereum have emerged as key players in the financial transactions of the digital drug trade. Their decentralized characteristics and emphasis on anonymity make them appealing to traffickers, who depend on these technologies to safeguard their operations.

Cryptocurrencies provide the luxury of untraceable transactions that hide the identities of both buyers and sellers, making it difficult for law enforcement to track these transactions. In addition, the ease of international transactions is also another reason for use of crypto. Cross-border payments are made easy through decentralized networks that do not rely on traditional banking systems.

Although blockchain technology initially provided complete anonymity, the rise of blockchain analysis tools has allowed authorities to trace transactions on certain public

ledgers like Bitcoin. However, privacy-focused coins like Monero pose additional challenges, as their protocols are designed to be untraceable.

Figure: Links between Drug Trafficking and Cryptocurrencies by UNODC

Governments and financial regulators are working alongside blockchain experts to oversee and monitor cryptocurrency use in illegal activities. Nevertheless, traffickers are constantly evolving to stay one step ahead of enforcement efforts, resulting in an ongoing struggle.

3.5 AI and Machine Learning in Drug Trafficking

The advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning has significantly contributed to the enhancement and also the prevention of drug trafficking. These days, such technologies influence the business of traffickers but also provide some additional means to address it by law enforcement.

Artificial intelligence is applied by drug dealers to enhance various illegal activities. For instance, through data analysis they can determine the most secure and quickest routes for transporting drugs while avoiding areas under tight surveillance from the authorities where possible. Secondly, these people employ machine learning in social media to target buyers

and recruit individuals. It becomes easier for them to identify certain vulnerable groups through analysis of user characteristics and preferences. This technology is also employed for controlling internet markets located at darknet where it helps in inventory management, setting adaptive prices, as well as resolving customer-seller conflicts. Thus, traffickers also rely on AI in evading law enforcement like monitoring police patrol routes or circumventing security systems e.g. CCTV cameras.

Nevertheless, law enforcement have also begun the application of AI and machine learning. The use of predictive policing applications enabled by Artificial Intelligence help to determine which areas are susceptible for drug dealing based on the examination of historical records of similar offences, crime reports as well as abnormal activity noticed within given regions. With such developments like darknet monitoring tools available today, police officers can easily follow up any unlawful activity done over hidden websites or forums. Additionally, AI systems are currently being used to track most payment transactions involving cryptocurrencies since they serve as primary means for buying illicit drugs; this allows them to expose entire criminal networks. It is possible for social media analysis tools equipped with facial or object recognition features to notice any cryptic signs/messages related to illegal activities. AI systems that can recognize faces or objects also exist which may help in identifying drug dealers as well as substances from previous records.

There are some difficulties with using AI in this battle however. The first issue is about privacy since AI typically includes going through individual data thereby raising arguments from an ethical standpoint. Another challenge is that many countries do not have enough finances or advanced technology to put sophisticated technology and AI systems efficiently.

4. Major Parties

a. İNTERPOL

INTERPOL has been tackling global and regional initiatives in the matter of digital crime and pharmaceutical crime. Operation Pangea has been carried out under INTERPOL's Illicit Goods and Global Health Programme (IGGH). It was established in 2008.
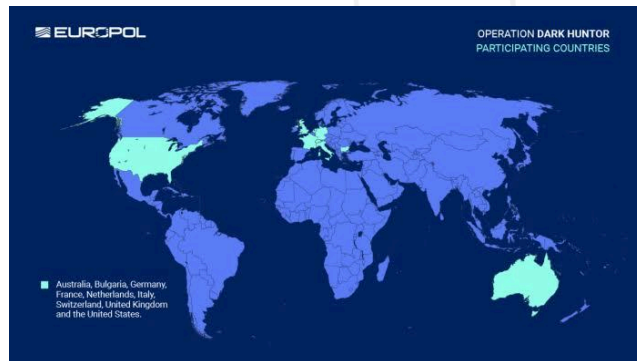
In 2021, operation Pangea executed Pangea XIV; resulting in the seizure of narcotics with an estimated value of USD 23,414,483 and the shutdown of 113,020 websites.

b. Europol

Europol has been the European Union (EU) law enforcement agency since 1999. The EU supports non-EU partner states and executes international operations in order to combat organized crime, cybercrime, and terrorism globally.

Operation DarkhunTOR is one of the biggest operational activities led by Europol starting from the beginning of 2021. Police forces across 9 non-EU partner states and Europol arrested 150 suspects involved in selling illicit drugs on the dark web. More than 31 Million USD cash and cryptocurrencies worth 6 Million Euros in addition to 234 kilograms of illicit goods and 45 firearms were seized. **(Figure 5: Countries involved in Operation DarkhunTOR)**

c. Social Media Platforms

Social media platforms also known as social networking sites (SNSs) are the new feeding grounds for illicit activities because of the low regulations and anonymity. SNSs implement mandatory or voluntary regulations on their platforms to restrict such activities. Meta, as the director of two networks Facebook & Instagram, blocks and removes such accounts and works closely with law enforcement to keep their platforms safe.

d. Cryptocurrency Platforms

Cryptocurrency platforms take their precautions as well. As one of the biggest cryptocurrency exchange services, Binance created and established its partner in the United States of America (USA) named Binance.Us. Binance.Us established crypto for law enforcement training across the USA. Such training was developed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and is currently provided by former FBI and law enforcement professionals.

5. Previous Attempts

Issue I Role of the Internet in addressing drug trafficking and abuse

UNODC/HONLAP/43/4*

Recommendations discussed and adopted by the UNODC mainly in the Asia and the Pacific region span from 2015 to 2019. Implementation of the recommendations includes four different issues and recommendations. The first two issues focus on the trafficking of illicit goods and their manufacturing. Issue 3 and its recommendations focus on border management

issues and drug trafficking on borders. The last issue focuses on the high-risk population in Asia and the Pacific, with children being the most affected by the rising state of illicit substance trade. Several solutions, recommendations, and regulations have been discussed and established by law.

The mentioned documents focus on regional solutions considering issues are global. The importance of cooperation among countries in Asia and the Pacific can be recreated globally.

[Operation SpecTOR](#) & [Operation DarkhunTOR](#)

Similar to Operation DarkhunTOR, Operation SpecTOR is a joint operation coordinated by Europol. The main difference between operation SpecTOR and the previous operations is the targets. Unlike previous operations, SpecTOR was established to take down the darknet market named "Monopoly Market". Operation SpecTOR successfully seized 117 firearms, 850 kilograms of illicit substances, and 53,4 Million USD in cash and virtual currencies.

The success of operation SpecTOR is based on the success of previous operations. Compared to previous operations such as DarkhunTOR and DisrupTOR, operation SpecTOR has more success in terms of arrest and sentenced person numbers. As of November 2023, the owner of Monopoly Market, Milomir Desnica pleads guilty in court.

6. Possible Solutions

Current solutions to the growing online world of drug trafficking are sufficient considering successful operations and measures. Stopping online drug trafficking seems unachievable besides disabling the internet. This constant battle is an endless cycle as much as it is impossible. Current methods are effective but not perfect and can always be improved.

a. Law Enforcement

A few examples of improving current methods can be equipping law enforcement agencies with the newest technological tools and training to identify and monitor illegal behaviors, funding specialized units responsible for online crime and drug trafficking, and strengthening worldwide communication to enforce cross-border operations and cooperations.

b. Regulations for Social Media and Cryptocurrencies

Countless governmental and intergovernmental organizations work on standard-setting and enforcing such policies. The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has its own recommendations also known as rules. The Travel Rule or Recommendation 16, is aimed at anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing (AML/CTF). Recommendation 16 covers virtual assets such as cryptocurrencies and virtual asset service providers (VASPs).

With the integration of AI into social media networks, new policies using such improvements can be used. AI and machine learning can detect illegal activities and remove any posts, accounts, and advertisements. Currently, social media users can report such behaviors. Users can detect hidden or disguised material. By analyzing what users report, AI can improve with machine learning constantly.

    c. Public Awareness

Informing the public, especially high-risk populations such as teens and young adults, and establishing whistleblower initiatives to ensure the safety and protection of individuals who report illegal activities. Community-led initiatives with the assistance of government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) would strengthen trust among the community.

7. Points to be Addressed

a. Aim and Goals
- Decreasing online drug trade and not harming the internet simultaneously
- Reduce usage of cryptocurrencies and social media in drug-related matters

b. International Cooperation
- Real-time information sharing and joint operations among nations
- Cooperation of not just governments but also organizations

c. Policy and Frameworks
- Regulations on cryptocurrency exchange platforms
- International agreements to address similar problems and possible solutions
- Monitoring systems on social media networks

d. Challenges
- Anonymity tools and rising encrypted illegal activity
- Online drug trade operating globally
- Technical expertise in law enforcement and insufficient tools

- ○ Evolving tactics of individuals who participate

e. Ethical Standpoint
- ○ Addressing and finding the balance between privacy rights and a need for surveillance
- ○ Data collection and transparency of the collected data

f. Monitoring and Evaluation
- ○ AML and KYC initiatives and their implementation
- ○ State of drug trafficking, increasing or decreasing since initiatives have been implemented.
- ○ Number of operations, arrests, and busts related to online drug-related activities

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