

Criminological aspects of contemporary drug situation in Kyrgyzstan: alarming tendencies

Annotation

The article describes the drug situation that has arisen in Kyrgyzstan at the present stage of development of the country, the actions of the national, international and regional level to counter drug trafficking are analyzed and the factors affecting the effectiveness of these measures and causing lack of steady progress in this area are given.

Keywords: drug situation, drug prophylactic, counteraction to illegal drug circulation, international cooperation

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Mini review

It is known that the drug situation in the field of illicit drug production, trafficking and consumption is very heterogeneous on a global scale and is characterized by certain trends in which orbit Kyrgyzstan entered as well. One of the most significant trends is the steady retraction in use of drugs of young people especially teenagers. Since the youth ensures the reproduction of the human capital all the sharpness and the harmfulness of this trend becomes clear. Another trend is the search for and forming of narcotic drugs new markets, involvement of new countries in illicit drug turnover. The main player in this field is the drug mafia which is using the economic laws, in particular by drug price fluctuations trying to prevent their overproduction or reducing of their consumption. Another trend is an extension of the scope and strengthening of criminal activities of criminal drug structures. Even today, in some countries, such as Colombia, the potential (financial, military) of mafia drug cartels exceeds the capacity of government institutions.

Maintain an illicit expensive drug trafficking banned only by drug cartels who became monopolists in their markets devastating small producers and suppressing the rivalry. The next trend is associated with an increase in the production of drugs in the areas of prolonged conflict. This trend is fully confirmed by the example of Afghanistan, where the population is forced to grow drug crops to survive as the production of other agricultural products becomes unprofitable. On this background, the consumption of own opium increases in country. Very dangerous is such a trend as the expansion of the drug into the territory of Russia and other member countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Events in Afghanistan have shown that the drug mafia will provoke instability in all the way of the drug routes to start then production and organize drug market there. Unfortunately, Kyrgyzstan is also a country of transit and through its territory drug routes passes from Afghanistan where more than 90% of all illegal

opioids are producing. Drugs are delivering in the direction of the Alai and Chon-Alai district of Osh oblast; Batken, Leilek, Kadamzhai areas of Batken oblast and then forwarded to Kazakhstan and Russia. It also should be noted emerging trends related to the illegal importation of new psychoactive substances in the form of smoking mixtures (SPICE) from China. Kyrgyzstan could become not only consumer but also the state of transit of these chemical drugs to Russia and Europe.

If we analyze the current drug situation in Kyrgyzstan, its main features are:

The presence on its territory of its own raw materials (opium, cannabis and ephedra) for illicit drug production;

- I. An unstable state of the economy, and derivatives from this social processes (unemployment, poverty, migration of population) that forming a constant demand for use of drugs;
- II. Passing drug routes through the territory of the country that is promoted by such terms as transparency of borders between the CIS countries, active work of the international mafia which has chosen ravaged Afghanistan for the production of opioids on the back of weak consolidation of the Central Asian states in regional drug safety.

These factors do not contribute to radical improvement of the drug situation but some work in this direction is constantly carried out by both governmental agencies and the public. Thanks to activities of law enforcement agencies over the last 5 years the volume of seizures of illicit traffic in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors have increased in 3,5 times. The diversion of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors trafficking is suppressing, in particular, at least 6-7% drug-related crimes in the general structure of crime in the Kyrgyz Republic are detected annually.^{1,2} In order

to reduce the demand for drugs prevention and treatment of drug dependence in the country is organized.³ Prophylaxis is carried out by numerous subjects as health and education authorities, local government, law enforcement agencies, civil society organizations and the media. For example, there are annual information campaigns dedicated to the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, including in the penitentiary system. Treatment is carried out by medical institutions by method of detoxification (treatment using medicinal products) as well as methods of opioid substitution therapy (OST) and non-pharmacological treatment of dependence which is actually a program of medical and psychological rehabilitation. Opioid substitution treatment programs are carried out in 20 stations on the basis of the state of drug rehabilitation organizations and offices for substance abuse counselors. Compulsory component of these programs is to provide psychological and social assistance to their members. It is expected that a third of persons with opioid dependence stayed on the official account and about 5 percent of injecting drug users is covered by these programs. In the penal system drug users is 5 per cent of the total number of all convicted although according to some expert estimation the number of injecting drug users in prisons can be up to 19 percent of the total prisons.⁴ Drug-free modalities programs are being implemented in the inpatient and ambulant conditions and focused mainly on the achievement of stable remission or complete abstinence from the drug after completion of the treatment program as well as on the motivation of obtaining and continuing treatment and relapse prevention. Their efficiency is not too high due to the lack of full rehabilitation centers in the system of the Ministry of Health of the Kyrgyz Republic.

There are programs to reduce drug-related harm in the country. They are focused mainly on injecting drug users and their families as an integral part of state policy in the field of HIV infection prevention among injecting drug users. It is well known that injecting drug use is a factor contributing to the spread of HIV, tuberculosis, hepatitis and other dangerous infections. These programs are implemented in health-care organizations, penal institutions and civil sector and provide services such as counseling by professionals; basic health care; needle and syringe exchange; the provision of disinfectants, condoms; information and educational activities, counseling and HIV testing; "Hotlines"; legal assistance and social support. According to the State Service for Drug Control of the Kyrgyz Republic data for 2011-2012 in the frame of programs operated 48 syringe exchange points, including 7 in the prison system more over there are 8 "Atlantis" rehabilitation centers for the drug addicts.⁵ The work on reducing mortality from drug use which according to official statistics amounts to 2% of the total number of persons who is registered in the drug rehabilitation organizations. However, according to experts, the real level of overdose death rate is much higher. This work is implemented among opioid users by spreading of opioid receptor antagonist - naloxone. In this regard, the Ministry of Health of the Kyrgyz Republic approved the "Standard of opioid overdose prevention using the drug naloxone". Since 2009, the number of participants in the program increased from 500 to 2,500 people.

Thus, the global trends in the sphere of illicit drug production, trafficking and consumption are very stable suggesting the need to strengthen actions on counteraction to these processes. Especially in light of the fact that on the background of the continuing expansion of the "old" drugs appear trends related to the production of new very hazardous substance in the form of Spices, "bath salts" that are not included in any lists and actively promoted to the drug markets.⁶ In

general, the drug situation in Kyrgyzstan is characterized as unstable due to the ongoing drug trafficking from Afghanistan and slightly reduced production of drugs from local raw materials, inadequate funding of public anti-drug agencies and anti-drug programs. In this regard, the Kyrgyz Republic is actively developing international systems of coordination. Joining in 1994 to the major antidrug UN Conventions,⁷ Kyrgyzstan entered into an united global anti-drug system. This was facilitated by the republic's accession to the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Organization for combating drug trafficking IDEC – International Drug Enforcement Conference (that bringing together more than 90 countries). Being a full member of the UN, Republic implements Political principles adopted by the UN General Assembly and also follows the guiding principles of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

In line with the international commitments a special body on drug control (currently State Drug Control Service under the Government of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan) was set up in the country which for over 20 years actively cooperates with UN agencies through the UN INCB, UNODC, UNDP and UNAIDS and other international institutions. As stated on the website of State Drug Control Service (SDCS), the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic signed more than 10 bilateral and multilateral international agreements in the field of drug control and combating drug trafficking. These include an agreement with the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Russian Federation, the Czech Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of China, the Republic of Uzbekistan, the United States of America, and others. Every year Kyrgyzstan takes part in the "Channel" international operation which has the status of a permanent regional anti-drug operation. To participate in such joint operations, other than organizations from the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) which included Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan, other states such as Azerbaijan, China, Latvia, Lithuania, Mongolia, Poland, the USA, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Estonia, Romania, Syria, Spain, Italy, Colombia and Bolivia recently join as observers.

Twenty seven channels of smuggling of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors, including those from Latin America to Europe, from Afghanistan to Tajikistan, from Kazakhstan to Russia, from Tajikistan to Russia, from Kyrgyzstan through Uzbekistan to Russia, from Estonia to Russia were eradicated. On the basis of the Memorandum of Understanding on Regional Cooperation in the field of drug control, a number of signatory states (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), created the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre (CARICC). The CARICC tasks are: assistance in organizing, conducting and coordinating of agreed joint international operations to combat illicit drug trafficking, ensuring the collection, storage, protection, analysis and exchange of information on cross-border criminality related to illicit drug trafficking. As part of another transnational organization - the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) a number of activities of anti-drug focus also carried out. These are the strategy and the action plan for drug prevention, the organization and carrying out of joint preventive operations dubbed the "The Mousetrap", conferences and meetings of the working groups, the establishment of a meaningful exchange of information. Kyrgyzstan actively participates in the "TARSET" annual international operations, as well as in the regional

program for Afghanistan and neighboring countries, held under the auspices of the UN. The Republic took part in anti-drug activities on the “CADAP-5” program within the framework of cooperation with the European Union. As noted in the National Security Concept of the Kyrgyz Republic,⁷ Kyrgyzstan recognizing the important strategic role of Central Asia pays great importance to the further deepening of regional integration which is a prerequisite for sustainable social and economic development. The basis of joint efforts in this area of regional States is the fight against international terrorism, drug trafficking and criminality, addressing of common social, economic and environmental issues and other regional issues.

However, a number of unsolved issues do not allow the country to adequately respond to the threat posed by the continuing drug expansion. In particular, in Kyrgyzstan did not developed the legal framework of primary drug prevention and there are no standards for its implementation. For example, in the field of education are missing school and university programs aimed at promoting a healthy lifestyle among young people, although it is well known that even the use of soft drugs is usually preceded by the use of widely different accessible psycho active substances (inhalants, tobacco and alcohol). All the attention of the authorities responsible for primary prevention focused only on medical and social consequences of drug abuse. At that the work in this area often is limited by numerous meetings, conferences, publication of small quantities of educational literature. It should be recognized that primary prophylactics as the most effective and inexpensive form of prevention is low in Kyrgyzstan. As for the secondary and tertiary drug prevention, which are carried out in health care organizations, the problems of poor material and technical equipment of drug rehabilitation organizations (number of beds, necessary medicines, etc.), as well as the lack of specialized training of experts in narcology for the effective treatment and prevention activities. Therefore, detoxification methods are mainly used, although there is a high demand in the treatment of drug addiction.

In addition, in the country there is a lack of rehabilitation centers; rehabilitation programs are mainly concentrated in the Republican Center of Narcology (RCN) of the Ministry of Health Care of the Kyrgyz Republic. Drug prevention is carried out in the panel system, although there, in spite of the large grant support, material and technical conditions and equipment of treatment and prevention departments of these institutions are still unsatisfactory. In the suppression of illicit drug trafficking, despite the measures taken, a significant reduction is not observed due to the lack of technical equipment of the authorities conducting the persecution of drug-related criminality. Drug-related criminality is armed with first-class communication equipment, all-terrain vehicles, even helicopters, not to mention weapons. Wherein the permeability of state borders of the country caused not only by lack of border infrastructure but also corruption. Therefore, Kyrgyzstan remains one of the active channels of international drug trafficking, where significant amounts of the drugs roam freely in the CIS countries and beyond.

In general, despite the political will and commitment of the State to the idea of fighting against drug trafficking, the existence of corruption in this area and other factors considerably hamper the organization of effective counteraction to illegal circulation of

drugs. As stated in the anti-drug program “there is an absence not only the facts but also the methodology of legalization detection of means derived from criminal drug trafficking. The struggle in this direction does not develop, although in most of the world this activity is one of the most promising. Meanwhile, the forces of international terrorism and extremism are actively using criminal drug trade as a source of financing of their subversive activities”⁸. The activity of law enforcement bodies of the republic is mainly aimed at bringing to justice the small sellers of drugs and drug users, storing drugs for their own use. Thus, according to the State Drug Control Service, the structure of drug-related crimes detected in 2012, possession of drugs without intent to sell more than 60% of the total number of these crimes. In addition, there is information from the representatives of international organizations and NGOs who point out that the increased law enforcement activity is observed in relation to clients of prevention programs or points of syringe exchange and opioid substitution therapy which is a hindering factor for the provision of drug services. It becomes evident the need to create a database accessible to persons illegally storing drugs in small amounts without the purpose of sale, which will strengthen the prevention component of the system of counteraction to drugs. It should be noted that drug trafficking directly impairs the overall operational situation in the republic. Murder on the basis of redistribution of spheres of influence in the criminal drug trafficking have become commonplace. Thus, the Kyrgyz Republic with a view to combating illicit drug trafficking is taking measures not only of national character, but also at international and regional level. However, due to certain factors of economic, social, technical and other nature steady progress in this area is not yet possible to achieve.

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Conflicts of interest

None.

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