



NewMUN

Chapter V

United Nations Office on
Drugs and Crime
Background Guide

Greetings, Delegates!

We pleasantly welcome all of you to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) council for NewMUN Chapter V!

The role of a delegate in an MUN can seem arduous, especially with the amount of research that goes into drafting position papers, research papers and more. But the role of a delegate is more than that. It involves being diplomatic, debating issues, creating innovative resolutions with other delegates, taking up challenges, and overall, having a great experience.

This background guide is an introduction to the two issues being presented in this council. It shall provide a brief description and links/resources for the issues at hand, but do not limit your research to the info present here! A prepared delegate must consider all aspects of the issue, included (but not limited to) from the perspective of their own delegation, as well as its allies and rivals' views on the matter at hand.

As members of this council, the resolutions that delegates will pass have massive impacts on the functioning of the current society, and each delegate must consider the several factors that propel every decision made in this council. This document is a starting point for all delegates to jump into the workings of one of the most crucial bodies on the planet! And additional research on the agendas and member states present is a must for UNODC members.

We look forward to a great conference with all of you!

Sincere regards,
Marwin Francis, Ishaan Binesh
Chairpersons

Agenda 1:

Trafficking of Opium under the Taliban Regime in Afghanistan

Introduction

To start the topic, we need to first understand “What is Opium?” Opium is a highly addictive non-synthetic narcotic that is extracted from the poppy plant, *Papaver somniferum*. The opium poppy is the key source for many narcotics, including morphine, codeine, and heroin.

Opium can be smoked, intravenously injected, or taken in pill form. Opium is also abused in combination with other drugs. Opium inhibits muscle movement in the bowels leading to constipation. It also can dry out the mouth and mucous membranes in the nose. Opium use leads to physical and psychological dependence, and can lead to overdose.

Opium Cultivation in Afghanistan

Opium is Afghanistan's most important agricultural product. During nearly a quarter-century of strife in Afghanistan, per capita incomes declined by a third and Afghanistan joined two other states racked by internal conflict in the dismal bottom three of the world's per-capita GDP rankings. Nine percent of the population was killed in just a decade, and a large part of the population fled the country. In farming areas, assets were ruined and food production fell by almost half. In this situation of anarchy and poverty, the cultivation of opium in Afghanistan spread very rapidly over the last ten years and now occurs in all 34 provinces. Afghanistan has become the world's leading source of opiates, supplying three quarters of the global market in 2003, reaching ten million abusers worldwide, of whom some 10,000 die each year from opiates produced in Afghanistan.

But with the invasion of the Taliban in 2021, everything changed. They implemented a nearly complete ban on the cultivation of opium poppy. However, the ban had little to no effect in the long run as Opium cultivation in Afghanistan increased by 32% over the previous year to 233,000 hectares – making the 2022 crop the third largest area under opium cultivation since monitoring began. Opium prices have soared following the announcement of the cultivation ban in April 2022. Seizures of opiates around Afghanistan indicated that the trafficking of Afghan opium and heroin has not stopped. Afghanistan supplies 80% of global opiate demand.

Why did the ban not succeed?

Afghanistan is well connected to regional and global drug markets. The trafficking of drugs via major highways out of Afghanistan remains high. Along the Balkan Route from Pakistan, Iran, and Turkey to Europe, heroin and meth continue to flow in large quantities, supplying markets throughout and outside Afghanistan's immediate region.

South Asia

At Torkham on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, customs reportedly seized an “unprecedented” amount of drugs in late 2021 and early 2022, including a record 130 kilogram haul of heroin. October also saw one of the biggest meth busts in Peshawar's history. Seizures in that area have indeed been sizable. In May alone, Pakistan's Anti-Narcotics Force made a massive bust of more than one ton of opiates and 255 kilograms of meth in the province of Balochistan, while the Pakistani Navy intercepted 4.5 tons of drugs in the northern Arabian Sea.

Furthermore, Pakistan is not only a transit country for methamphetamine leaving Afghanistan, but also a large market for the drug, which is popular in educational institutions.

Afghanistan-origin drugs also make their way across South Asia. Sri Lanka, where there have been repeated maritime hauls since the Taliban takeover, seized 325 kilograms of heroin and meth in April this year.

India is perhaps the most concerning part of the regional trafficking picture. With a massive population and a large number of opioid users, the country is highly susceptible to Afghanistan-origin drugs.

Indeed, there have already been a series of drug seizures at Indian ports, most notably a vast haul of almost three tons of heroin at Mundra in Gujarat last September which reportedly originated in Kandahar, Afghanistan, before being trafficked to Iran and then on to India. In 2021, Gujarat police seized the highest amount of drugs in the state, at least eight-hundred times more than the previous year. And the seizures have continued this year: in April, 260 kilograms of heroin were intercepted at Kandla port, and seventy-five kilograms from a container near Mundra in July.

Iran and Turkey

Narcotics trafficked from Afghanistan to Europe often travel through Pakistan and then Iran, where there have been massive busts in the southeast near the Afghan border. More than one hundred tons of drugs were seized in the area in the last eight months of 2021, according to local authorities.

Big hauls have continued this year. Only recently, over one ton heroin was grabbed in the southeast and record-breaking 1.1 tons of meth found hidden in tankers entering from Afghanistan. An Iranian official said that seizures of Afghanistan-origin meth and heroin had increased. From Iran, narcotics enter Turkey. Traffickers are reportedly exploiting unprecedented refugee flows to smuggle drugs across the border. Turkish authorities have also reported large seizures, including more than a ton of liquid and crystal meth intercepted in Istanbul in May and another large bust in July.

And, the results of this are profound. Meth has reached every single Turkish province, the government claims, and was second only to cannabis as the most widely-used substance in Istanbul, according to wastewater analysis. It is therefore no surprise that Ankara is prioritizing meth and increasing its efforts to combat trafficking. In 2021, Turkey intercepted 5.5 tons of the drug, up from 4.1 tons the previous year. Notably, this is double the amount seized in Europe as a whole.

Suggested Moderated Caucus Topics

1. Examining the Role of International Cooperation in Combating Opium Trafficking under the Taliban Regime.
2. Evaluating Regional Strategies to Combat Opium Trafficking in Afghanistan.
3. Examining the Role of Interagency Collaboration in Combating Opium Trafficking under the Taliban Regime.
4. Developing Rehabilitation and Alternative Livelihood Programs for Poppy Farmers under the Taliban Regime.

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Agenda 2:

The Regulation of Civilian Firearm Ownership and its impact on Gun Violence

Introduction

Guns in the earlier times were only used by the military during wars and conflicts between countries. But ever since they became more accessible, it has only been used in the wrong hands. Criminals started forming gangs and used the power of guns to gain control over the common people. Firearms were since then, used to carry out many illicit activities like robbery and theft, mass murder, traffic drugs and humans, and so on.

Though guns are not always a cause of violence and can be used legally for a variety of sanctioned activities, they are still lethal weapons that are used in approximately two thirds of the homicides and more than half of all the suicides. There are many psychological factors, social circumstances, and cultural factors that lead to gun violence. And exposure to gun violence causes PTSD, depression, alcohol and substance abuse etc. Hence, preventing guns from falling into the wrong hands and controlling the movement of firearms among citizens is a very crucial task for every country.

What is Gun Violence?

Gun violence is violence committed with the use of firearms, such as handguns, shotguns, or semi-automatic rifles. Gun violence can be done in various forms such as homicides, mass shootings, robbery and assault, domestic violence and even suicides. More than 220,000 people die every year, or about 600 people every day, from gun violence alone. Up to 71% of all homicides globally involve gun violence.

More than 1 billion firearms are in circulation globally and the vast majority- 85%- are in the hands of private individuals or civilians. Gun violence committed by private individuals is typically concentrated in low-income urban neighborhoods with high levels of crime, including drug trafficking. Many of these areas are blighted by inadequate policing or policing which does not comply with international standards on human rights and law enforcement, and a lack of access to public services.

Impact of Gun Violence on Civilians

Gun violence can rob people of their lives, health and education.

People living in communities plagued by firearm violence may find it difficult or even dangerous to access health care facilities. This is especially true in areas where neighborhoods are partitioned by armed criminal gangs or subject to curfews due to insecurity.

Mass shootings and other firearm violence can disrupt children's education and make students' journeys to and from school dangerous.

Endemic gun violence damages the learning environment by disrupting school attendance and rates of retention, and makes it harder to recruit and retain teaching staff. This can, in turn, lead to poorer outcomes for students in terms of employment and income. It can also perpetuate cycles of deprivation, crime and violence.

Gun violence also shows systemic discrimination. In 2020, 60.9% of the 19,995 people killed by gun homicide in the US were African Americans, despite African Americans making up just 13% of the US population.

Women facing domestic violence and children are also disproportionately affected by gun violence. In 2020, the ratio of women in the Caribbean killed in gun violence was more than three times the global average.

The world has seen a horrifying rise in mass shootings in these recent years. There were 683 mass shootings from the US alone in the year 2021. In 2022, there was a total of 51 school shootings worldwide, more school shootings than any other year; inflicting psychological harm on children who witnessed the gun violence.

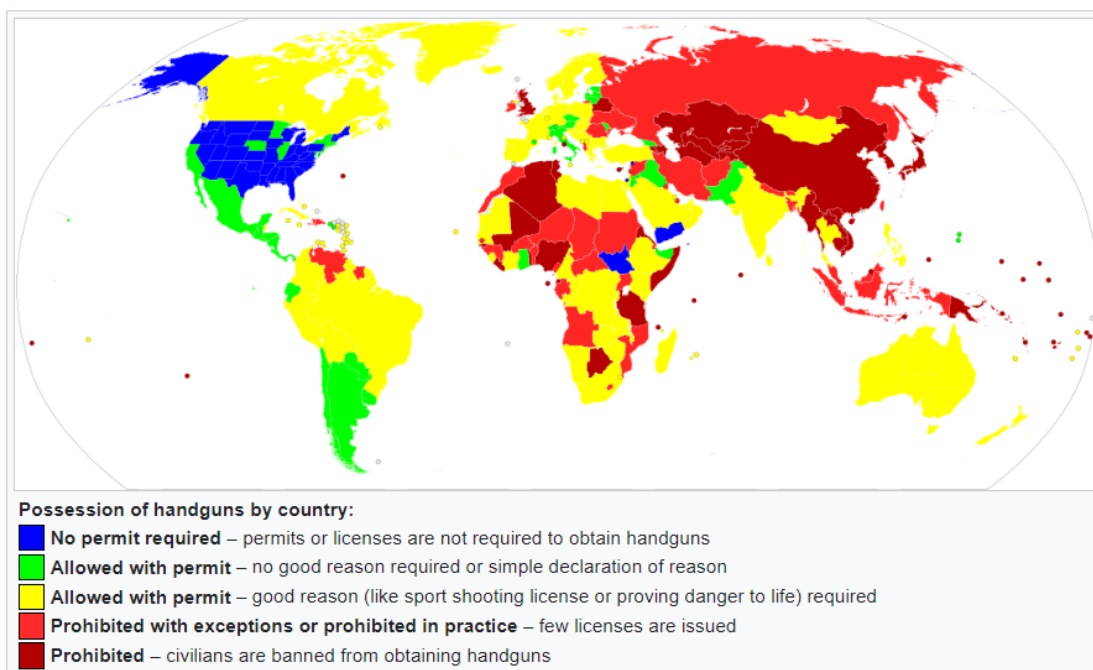
Failure to address systemic discrimination; failure to keep firearms out of the hands of those most likely to misuse them; and a failure to invest in gun violence prevention programs all contribute to this crisis.

Regulations on Firearms

Firearms regulation or gun control, regulates the manufacture, sale, transfer, possession, modification, and use of small arms by civilians. Laws of some countries may afford civilians a right to keep and bear arms, and have more liberal gun laws than other jurisdictions.

Different countries have different criteria for civilians in-order to be eligible for possessing a firearm. Some countries have also banned citizens from ever owning a firearm.

Persons restricted from legal access to firearms mainly includes those below a certain age or those with a criminal record. Firearms licenses to purchase or possess may be denied to those defined as most at risk of harming themselves or others, persons with a history of domestic violence, alcohol use disorder or substance use disorder, mental illness, depression, or those who have attempted suicide. Those applying for a firearm license may have to demonstrate competence by completing a gun safety course and show provision for a secure location to store weapons.



But why do civilians own guns?

I. Self-Protection

Many more criminals are killed or wounded each year by armed citizens than by the police; this proves that owning a gun is possibly the most effective way to protect oneself from crime.

A survey conducted by Florida State University Professor Gary Kleck estimates that there were approximately 645,000 defensive uses of handguns against persons per year, excluding police or military uses. The survey also found that guns of all types were used substantially more often defensively than criminally and that gun-wielding civilians in self-defense or some other legally justified cause killed between 1,500 and 2,800 felons annually. The view that potential crime victims run a greater risk of injury if they are armed has been proven groundless. According to U.S. Justice Department victimization studies analyzed by Kleck, for both robbery and assault, victims who used guns for protection were less likely either to be attacked or injured than victims who responded in any other way; and victims who resisted robbers with guns were less likely to lose their property.

II. For Recreational Purposes

Target shooting and hunting are two popular recreational activities, and this would explain ownership of guns by a substantial number of people. Taking this as a hobby would mean having to buy multiple firearms. There are also several shooting competitions held in many countries all around the world.

Gun Ownership by Country

The number of firearms owned by each country varies significantly depending on the regulations put on these firearms. This amount hence also has direct relation with the number of deaths caused due to gun violence each year. But more than 175 countries do allow citizens to own firearms. Mexico, Guatemala and the United States have gone one step further and made gun ownership a constitutional right. Countries like the Czech Republic and Switzerland are also more liberal when it comes to gun ownership. The citizens in these countries value the ability to own a gun, so as to defend themselves in times of an emergency, despite the rising cases of deaths due to gun violence.

Illegal Arms Trafficking

Arms trafficking or gunrunning is the illicit trade of contraband small arms, explosives, and ammunition, which constitutes part of a broad range of illegal activities often associated with transnational criminal organizations. The illegal trade of small arms, unlike other organized crime commodities, is more closely associated with exercising power in communities instead of achieving economic gain. This leads to the oppression of smaller communities by criminal organizations all around the world. Scholars estimate illegal arms transactions amount to over US\$1 billion annually.

According to the Small Arms Survey, globally there were approximately 857 million firearms in the hands of civilians in 2017. Of this total, only 12 per cent were reported as registered. In Latin America, one of the most violent regions in the world, the increased availability of firearms – particularly of assault weapons that began to flow south after the US federal assault weapons ban expired in 2004 – has been linked to an increase in homicides. In South Asia, an estimated 63 million guns have been trafficked into India and Pakistan.

UN's Actions

To limit the proliferation of illicit firearms, the nearly-200 Member States of the United Nations have agreed to implement a range of measures to 'prevent, combat and eradicate' the harmful effects of small arms and light weapons around the world. These include the UN Firearms Protocol, the UN small arms Programme of Action, the UN Register of Conventional Weapons, the UN Arms Trade Treaty, and the International Tracing Instrument for small arms (ITI).

Suggested Moderated Caucus Topics

1. Assessment of International Approaches to Gun Control and their success.
2. Balancing of Individual Rights and Public Safety in Firearms Regulation.
3. Formation of a Uniform Policy on Firearms Ownership for all Countries Worldwide.
4. Means of reducing the illegal trafficking of arms to civilians and criminals through international borders.

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