

Title:

Drug Rehab Views: Afghanistan's Opium Poppy Industry Is Blooming

Word Count:

396

Summary:

The worldwide illicit drugs business is by far the most profitable illicit global trade, says the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), earning some \$320 billion annually. Compared to this, human trafficking at \$32 billion and illegal firearms at \$1 billion are a drop in the bucket. Afghanistan, producing 92% of the world's illegal opium from its miles and miles of poppy farms, is by far the world's largest contributor to the production of illicit heroin and morph...

Keywords:

Article Body:

The worldwide illicit drugs business is by far the most profitable illicit global trade, says the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), earning some \$320 billion annually. Compared to this, human trafficking at \$32 billion and illegal firearms at \$1 billion are a drop in the bucket. Afghanistan, producing 92% of the world's illegal opium from its miles and miles of poppy farms, is by far the world's largest contributor to the production of illicit heroin and morphine. For millions of addicts around the world, the dark force from Afghanistan that rules their lives can only be overcome through drug rehab.

Not surprisingly, no one has come up with a workable idea on how to stop it. The problem is that the chain of "narcodollars" reaches from the poppy farms all the way to the highest levels of Afghanistan's government, with the Taliban insurgents in the mix in a very big way. At \$3.1 billion, the opium trade is the equivalent of a third of the country's total economy. Last year's 6,100 tons of opium was worth \$60 billion at street prices, and this year an even larger crop is expected.

As well as keeping the drug barons rich, the drug trade has affected Afghanistan's citizenry in an unexpected and very negative way. Historically, poppy farmers and citizens rarely used the drugs personally. Today, according to UN reports, thousands of Afghani's are abusing the drugs and becoming addicted, and desperately need drug rehab. But the country doesn't have the necessary

infrastructure to support drug rehab facilities.

As for solutions, the U.S. is pushing for crop spraying and destruction. But thousands of farmers will be out of work and penniless. Replacing poppies with other crops won't work because there's no distribution system for exporting produce. Others are suggesting the opium trade be legitimized and production redirected for medicines. But the health industry won't pay street prices to drug barons, so that probably won't fly.

Meanwhile, here in America we continue to deal with street drug crime and lives being ruined through opiate addiction. Until a solution is found to stop the supplies of drugs from around the world, we can try to prevent addiction by our own example and through effective education. And we must care for those who suffer addiction with successful drug rehab programs that really work.