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INTRODUCTION

This report sets out to analyse the drug situation in the North Africa Regional Formation during 2011 and part of 2012, point out the main external aid needs identified by the national authorities in the region and inform the Central Dublin Group of the recommendations made by the corresponding mini Dublin groups.

This Regional Formation covers Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia.

1. ALGERIA

Overview

Supply of drugs

Since 2000, there have been a large number of seizures of cannabis resin in Algeria. The trend in 2011 compared to the previous year shows a 98.02 % increase in the quantity of that substance seized by the Algerian enforcement authorities, customs staff and army units deployed in the country's border areas.

As a result, 53 323 093 kg of cannabis resin were seized in 2011, compared to the 23 041 97 kg seized in 2010.

The amount of crop-growing activities detected fell by 67.78 %, with a total of 2 144 plants seized. The quantities seized in the internal market, on Algerian territory, also dropped by 3.7 % and those for personal consumption fell by 50.67 %. The largest increase in seizures was for attempts to bring cannabis resin into Algeria, which rose 86 % in 2011.

60.11 % of the seizures of cannabis resin were made in the *Wilaya* of Béchar, on the border with Morocco. There was a repeat of the types of incidents and armed clashes that had taken place in this area in 2010. The most recent seizure took place on 13 February 2012, with the confiscation of 1.5 tonnes of cannabis resin as well as arms and ammunition in Erg Chech (Béchar).

The increased activity of drug trafficking networks in 2011 coincided with rising instability in the Sahel region, which was exacerbated by the Libyan conflict and by the social protests in Algeria during the same period; this meant that a large proportion of the Algerian security forces had to be deployed in crowd control measures, which presumably accounts for the decrease in the number of seizures made within Algeria.

The increased seizures of the abovementioned substance on the border with Morocco is consistent with the Algerian army's involvement in the sealing of both the land and air borders, which was carried out in collaboration with customs and border police personnel.

In February 2012, the National Gendarmerie announced, through the media, its intention to set up an electronic border surveillance system as soon as possible that would cover 2 825 km of the country's South-West border.

In addition to the Béchar *Wilaya*, the *Wilaya* of Tlemcen, which also borders on Morocco, is one of the natural routes for the entry of cannabis resin, brought in by various means: on pack animals, on foot, in tourist vehicles or by lorry.

As in previous periods, seizures of the substance have continued along Algeria's coast, though the 343 520 kg represent a decrease of 42.73 % compared to 2010.

In terms of seizures, psychotropic substances come in second place after cannabis, and though the quantity seized in 2011 – 262 074 tablets – was lower than in the previous year, it remained significant owing to its direct impact on consumption within Algeria.

There was a marked increase in the presence of cocaine and heroin in 2011. Those substances were mainly seized from nationals of sub-Saharan origin.

Based on the above, the following assertions can be made:

- Seizures of cannabis resin on Algerian territory during 2011 increased significantly compared to the previous year, presumably owing to the gradual sealing of the border with Morocco through the increased deployment of personnel by the security forces engaged in combating drugs and smuggling, and support from the army.

- In the context described in the previous point, the routes used by drug trafficking networks coincide with those used for trafficking of human beings and organised crime, which suggests that the latter operations are increasingly being used to back up the former.
- As in previous periods, the fact that Spain, France, Greece and Italy have been identified as destination countries for the drug means that closer analysis is needed of the foreign currency trafficking generated by this illegal activity and of the way in which such money is returning to the networks involved.
- Ongoing emerging threats include the gradual establishment, in countries on the edge of the Sahel, of storage facilities for cocaine in transit, as well as the renewal of the levels of violence of the networks involved in cannabis trafficking, leading to armed clashes with the Algerian security forces.
- The instability in this region is growing, with emerging conflicts such as that over Azawad in Mali and the incipient activity of various AQMI terrorist structures such as MUJAO, whose area of operations includes West Africa, a cocaine entry route.
- The continuing presence of psychotropic pills for marketing and consumption led to a very large increase in the number of psychotropic drug users arrested in 2011 (827) compared to the figure for 2010 (372).

Demand for drugs

Statistics published in February 2012 by the Algerian police (DGSN) show that there are 300 000 drug addicts between the ages of 14 and 35, and that 45 % of them are women.

Recommendations

- Boost cooperation in training for operations and prevention of drug use, and step up cooperation in forms of treatment for drug addicts.

- Propose the adaptation of Algeria's legislation, i.e. the code of criminal procedure, to accommodate coordination mechanisms to develop controlled deliveries, in order to identify the structure of the networks operating at the points of departure, transit and final destination of drugs, thus enabling the development of comprehensive action.
- Strengthen the international arrangements on coordination of anti-drugs operations in the Mediterranean, with a particular focus on money laundering, in respect of which the rules have recently been amended.

2. EGYPT

Overview

Supply of drugs

Cannabis is the commonest drug in Egypt, which is a consumer though not a producer country. It arrives mainly via the Western border, though also by sea from Asia. In April 2011, for instance, 3 tonnes of Pakistani hashish were seized in Egyptian territorial waters. In June, 8 tonnes were seized in the Western desert region.

The herbal cannabis consumed in Egypt is partially imported, however there are some small crops in the Sinai peninsula that the Egyptian authorities have been trying to eradicate for years. The drug is brought through the tunnel that crosses the Suez Canal - or, occasionally, by swimmers carrying the packages - to Cairo, where it is sold for consumption at three times its original price. In February 2011, a tonne of herbal cannabis was seized from a hidden compartment on a lorry.

Synthetic drugs generally arrive in Egypt, the consumer country, in containers dispatched from producer or transit countries. In October 2011, 14 million tablets were confiscated in the Alexandrian port of El-Dekheila, whilst in December 2011, 17 million were confiscated at the Red Sea port of Sokhna. We should stress the recent increase in trafficking of these substances, in particular Tremadol, from China and India to Egypt: in the last two months, 210 million tablets have been seized in the country.

The Egyptian authorities have repeatedly suggested, with regard to synthetic drugs, that there is a need to establish a centre in Europe that is capable of processing all information relating to containers, has an international scope and is accessible to all countries. They have also signalled the importance of having a procedure for checking documents relating to exports of certain chemical substances (information about the manufacturer, etc.), since illegal substances are often trafficked under the guise of what appears to be a legal export product, for instance through altering the composition of a medicine.

Heroin is coming from Asia, in particular Afghanistan. In February 2011, 5 kg were seized from a hidden compartment on a lorry.

There are some opium plantations in Sinai whose product is intended for local consumption. As cocaine is expensive, consumption is restricted to a very small and affluent social group.

To summarise, we will set out below the overall quantities of drugs seized in 2011 compared to those in the previous period.

- Hashish: 15 tonnes (2010)/18 tonnes (2011)
- Herbal cannabis: 106 tonnes/73 tonnes
- Synthetic drugs: 132 000 000 tablets/105 000 000 tablets
- Heroin: 222 kg/10 kg
- Opium: 50 kg/10 kg
- Cocaine: 5 kg/1.5 kg

3. LIBYA

Overview

Supply of drugs

The general situation in the campaign against drugs has worsened dramatically over the last year. As a result of the recent conflict there is no institutional anti-drugs policy, since the current authorities have not seen this as a priority. This is illustrated by the fact that the Ministry of the Interior is in charge of combating arms trafficking, illegal immigration and illegal importing of vehicles and alcohol, yet does not have any cooperation with other state ministries or bodies.

Reports show that there has been an increase in the amount of drug trafficking. As in previous years, hashish has been the substance trafficked most and there have been marked increases in the trafficking of heroin and ecstasy and, in a new development, a large rise in the trafficking of cocaine.

Libya can now be regarded as a transit country for these drugs, which are mainly destined for Europe. Nevertheless, the fact drug consumption by the Libyan population is constantly on the rise meant, even in previous years, that the authorities had to have been aware of the scale of the problem. Circumstances such as the rise in youth unemployment, the falling cost of drugs owing to the increase in supply and the way in which various militias have been exploiting this trafficking have facilitated this substantial growth in domestic consumption.

The routes used by the traffickers have not changed even though the types of trafficking have increased, owing to the poor current control arrangements carried out by the authorities at their land, air and sea borders. Cannabis comes mainly from North-West Africa and Egypt, and heroin mainly from Central African countries, whilst domestic production of ecstasy is reported to be rising.

Recommendations

In conclusion, the current Libyan authorities are starting from scratch in terms of combating drug trafficking. The former ANGA (national anti-drug trafficking institution), which used to be the counterpart institution for these matters, appears no longer to be operating and in principle there is no similar body focusing on developing an anti-drug trafficking policy.

The Libyan authorities recognise their inability to carry out an effective campaign owing to the lack of human and technical resources, so any cooperation is welcome.

Two outstanding issues remain: firstly, how any cooperation can be started if it is not possible to identify a Libyan counterpart beforehand and, secondly, the authorities' preference to discuss these matters at bilateral level rather than subjecting themselves to scrutiny by multinational bodies.

The main recommendation would therefore be to provide assistance to the Libyan authorities and encourage their involvement in international bodies working on drugs policy.

4. MOROCCO

Overview

Supply of drugs

Drug production in Morocco is centred around cannabis for producing hashish. In that regard, it is thought that Morocco has considerably reduced the number of hectares devoted to growing cannabis, though only in those regions whose economy is not largely dependent on its production. The crop-growing area remains approximately the same in Taunate, Chefchauen and Ketarna provinces. It is assumed that production is continuing at similar levels since the region produces two or even three harvests per year.

There is no new information concerning trafficking of other psychotropic substances across Morocco. However, it is interesting to note the recent confiscation in Algeciras (Spain) of a large quantity of trafficked ephedrine (1 500 kg) bound for Morocco from China.

There are fears that exchanging of drugs for arms, which is believed to be taking place in countries in the region, is also happening in Morocco. It should be noted that Morocco is particularly concerned by this practice. Combating terrorism is more important to the Kingdom of Morocco than combating drugs. As a result, the Moroccan police authorities are said to be very concerned about the connection between drugs and arms.

The Moroccan authorities have asked the Spanish police authorities for cooperation in preventing drugs trafficking into Morocco using light aircraft. Spain is providing effective cooperation in this area.

In addition to the above, some statistics on drug trafficking (operations carried out by the Moroccan security forces during 2011) were presented at a meeting by the Italian delegate, Mr Silvestris. The statistics come from the Royal Gendarmerie.

Drug trafficking - number of seizures and arrests:

- Number of cases handled: 4 118

- Number of cases solved: 3 432

- Quantity of drugs seized, in kilograms:
 - Kif: 131 328.855
 - Tobacco: 9 526.851
 - Cannabis resin: 87 638.677

- Hard drugs seized:
 - Heroin (in grams): 54.6
 - Cocaine (in grams): 13 210.81
 - Psychotropic substances (in units): 2 510

- Forms of transport used:
 - Taxi: 12
 - LVs: 359
 - HGVs: 6
 - Two-wheeled vehicle: 369
 - Animals: 150
 - Boat: 58
 - Jet ski: 3
 - Motorboat: 91
 - Tractor: 8
 - Aeroplane: 4

- Arrested persons:
 - Moroccans:
 - Men: 4 638
 - Women: 91
 - Foreigners:
 - Men: 33
 - Women: 0

5. MAURITANIA

Overview

Supply of drugs

Mauritania is still considered to be a transit country for cocaine, although the major seizures of the drug in 2008 and 2009 have not been replicated by any of the same magnitude. This may be due to the security measures implemented under the campaign against terrorism in the Sahel region. These measures would seem to be beneficial in terms of restricting drug trafficking, in particular of cocaine, especially since the major strengthening of the land borders with Mali. Although there has not been any major seizure since the measures were implemented in 2009, that is no guarantee of the absence of cocaine trafficking via Mauritania.

Mauritania is also a transit country for cannabis from Morocco bound for the Arab Peninsula and the Eastern Mediterranean. Here we would highlight the gendarmerie's confiscation of 2.5 tonnes in January. Unlike the cocaine trafficking situation, it is possible that there has been an increase in trafficking of cannabis by sea from Morocco.

The factors facilitating such trafficking are the country's geographical location, its trade relations with the surrounding countries and the weakness of its enforcement bodies. There are, however, no reliable trafficking statistics.

There is no tradition of either growing or producing drugs in Mauritania. Local consumption is confined to herbal cannabis, which is used for traditional practices (Indian hemp). Trafficking of cocaine may, however, be boosting consumption in certain circles. A retail trade is being carried out by traffickers who are sometimes paid in kind, i.e. not with money. Indeed, the Mauritians involved in the networks concerned are usually local middlemen and not responsible for the trafficking.

The Financial Information Analysis Commission (CANIF) has received fewer than five reports of suspicious transactions a year from the Mauritanian banks, which is considered rather scant. This may result from the failure to raise the awareness of bank managers, the lack of disciplinary sanctions by CANIF and the option of making financial payments by carrying the money around on one's person rather than using bank transfers.

International cooperation

The project to reinforce the dog brigade, that was started by France in 2010 and subsequently supported by Spain's Guardia Civil, is continuing. In 2011, the training course on detection of drugs and explosives for 12 dog experts was completed. In 2012, the plan is to provide updated versions of the course every 3 months.

In 2011, France funded the purchase of various equipment, including a submarine equipped for prolonged surveillance, together with training activities organised by the Central Office for Combating Illegal Trafficking in Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (OCLCTISS). In 2012, EUR 71 375 has been earmarked for funding the purchase of 3 quads, personal equipment and computers, as well as a course on enquiry techniques.

In addition, France, the European Union and the IOM are funding the construction and fitting out of border posts, which should also have a beneficial impact on the campaign against drug trafficking.

Another priority is to support the bodies working in this area, mainly through the provision of training on the ground. That is the goal of the European Commission's West Sahel programme, which is essentially concerned with asylum and migration. In September 2011, the training activities on immigration in Mauritania touched on the subject of drugs, including drug detection, the use of hidden compartments, passenger control and forged documents, etc. The Spanish national police have also provided training on forged documents at Nouakchott airport.

The United States, too, have been providing regular training to the Mauritanian police, including a course on border control in March 2012 and another, planned for June 2012, on maritime interdiction. The provision of various forms of logistic support (such as lorries, night vision binoculars and GPS systems) is also planned.

A German assessment mission, tasked with drawing up some practical projects in this area, is planned for June 2012.

In 2011, Mauritania's forensic services attended the regional seminar for forensic service institutes in West Africa organised by UNODC under the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan on illicit drug trafficking. UNODC is to provide training on money laundering in cooperation with CANIF and to support Mauritania through an integrated country programme on combating illicit drug trafficking, organised crime and financing of terrorism, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of the penal system and contributing to reduction of the demand for drugs and prevention of AIDs.

Recommendations

Mauritania has no overall perspective on drugs trafficking at either national or international level. As a result it is difficult to draw up a strategy for combating the problem. The OCLCTISS does not centralise the information effectively enough and the police do not systematically provide information on drugs cases, which means that the true magnitude of the cases is not known.

The Mauritanian authorities are not sufficiently aware of the international impact of this trafficking. They are not in touch with their counterparts in neighbouring countries and do not use the Interpol networks. There is some cooperation and exchanging of information with European police forces at an operational level, however this needs to be improved and reinforced.

The approach to police enquiries is conceptually flawed. The authorities do not follow up cases of trafficking or conduct subsequent analysis of the drug seized. There are also considerable shortcomings with regard to the judicial treatment of the subject. The Public Prosecutor should play an important role of control and coordination of the police, supplementing cooperation at an operational level.

The judges, the services responsible for surveillance of the financial system and the health and pharmaceutical sectors require specialised training.

The provision of technical equipment for surveillance, transmission, enquiries and toxicological analyses continues to be inadequate.

Training courses for instructors must also remain a priority. In this respect, the National Training Unit for Combating Drugs and Drug Addiction (UNAFDT), set up in 1997, should be given support.

Another possible action would be the integration of all bodies responsible for combating drug trafficking and the setting up of liaison offices.

With regard to money laundering, it should be proposed that it be mandatory for banks to report suspicious transactions to the CANIF. There is a need to raise awareness among the heads of financial institutions and consideration should be given to the possibility of exchanging information with the Central Bank of Mauritania should substantial sums entering the mini Dublin Group countries be notified.

6. TUNISIA

Overview

Supply of drugs

According to public opinion, drug trafficking and use have increased considerably since the revolution. Although, in view of the lack of official data, we have no details for comparison which would allow us to back up this hypothesis, it is certain that since the war in Libya border controls have been reduced, both in the west with Algeria and in the east with Libya, and this has been conducive to all kinds of illicit trafficking in fuel, livestock, food products, and perhaps also arms and drugs.

According to data submitted by the spokesman for the Customs unions, in 2011 this body seized 1 172 kg of cannabis and 3 kg of heroin in Tunisia.

In view of the widespread criticism of the growing insecurity in the country, the Ministry of the Interior has conducted various public security campaigns against crime, and there are regular operations in which minor traffickers are detained and small quantities of drugs, bladed weapons, alcoholic drinks and stolen goods are seized. In any case there is no data to demonstrate that Tunisia is a country through which drugs transit on a large scale.

Demand for drugs

Now that the news blankets of the past have been lifted, local media are increasingly publishing articles on small-scale drug trafficking and drug use. From these it can be inferred that hashish, glue-sniffing and the use of psychotropic substances such as Subutex are common in Tunisian society and especially in the suburbs of the capital, Greater Tunis.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Health has decided to close the El Amal "Hope" centre, the main drug treatment centre for addicts, officially for "fitting-out work". There are those who say that it has been closed because of financial problems and, in particular, because a review of the centre's statute and of the law governing the treatment of drug addicts is pending. In the meantime patients have been referred to the Charles Nicolle hospital and the ATUPRET detoxification centre (Tunisian association to prevent drug addiction). It is apparent that drug addicts are somewhat neglected and that facilities for AIDS sufferers are lacking.

It should be pointed out that a movement in favour of the legalisation of drug use has emerged. Last February a rally took place opposite the Constitutional Assembly to demand the legalisation of drug use. In the forefront of this movement are people such as the well-known blogger Slim Amamou, the former State Secretary for Youth in the first transitional government. This movement is asking for an amendment of the vestigial law which treats users as criminals and imposes an excessive penalty of a year's imprisonment for drug use.

The members of the mini Dublin Group have noted that, despite numerous requests for information on the subject by the various attachés, no general information, statistics or data have been provided. One might ask whether this lack of data is due to the fact that they do not wish to provide information or that they simply do not have it. The UNPD is developing a programme to modernise the security sector which it is hoped will put an end to this problem.

The Tunisian Government (Directorate for Primary Health Care, through its PNLSIMST (national programme to combat AIDS and STDs) and the Tunisian Association for Information and Guidelines on AIDS), carried out a sero-behavioural survey in 2009 which contributed to the launching of a strategic plan to combat HIV-AIDS infection and sexually transmissible diseases. In this connection, Dr Samir Bouarrouj, Secretary General of the above Association, submitted in 2012 a report on drug addiction and AIDS in Tunisia, in which he states that there are 10 000 intravenous drug users in the country. He adds that 39 % of HIV carriers are drug addicts, 3 % of intravenous drug users are seropositive and 29 % have hepatitis C.

Legal and institutional framework

Developments in rules and legislation are in full swing in Tunisia, but for the time being the country's drugs legislation has not been repealed or amended and Law No 92/52 of 18 May 1992 on drugs continues to apply.

International cooperation

None of the members of the mini Dublin Group has received requests for cooperation between security forces to combat drug trafficking.

In March 2012 the Ministry of Justice, in collaboration with the Central Bank of Tunisia and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), organised a seminar on techniques for investigating economic crime.

The UNODC does not have an office in Tunis, but in 2012 is to develop a programme in support of the fight against AIDS from its branch in Cairo.

The United Kingdom has donated to Tunisia five portable scanners for detecting drugs and explosives at Tunisia's international airports.

Recommendations

Given the lack of information on the internal situation, it is difficult to make recommendations as we do not know if the campaign against drugs is being conducted effectively or not. The first recommendation is therefore to have transparency of information, allowing a full picture of consumption, trafficking and production of drugs in Tunisia.

With regard to international cooperation, we would welcome any measure based on transparency, mutual trust and information exchange between the various security services to allow more effective coordination of the fight against drug trafficking.

Other recommendations would be:

- to promote the participation of members of the Tunisian security forces in international seminars, as well as technical assistance and operational support in this field;
 - to strengthen cooperation with the health authorities and reform the legal framework using a coherent, cross-cutting approach based on human rights and the effectiveness of the anti-drugs campaign.
-