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INTRODUCTION

This report sets out to analyse the drug situation in the North Africa Regional Formation during 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.

It contains the reports from the mini Dublin groups for Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania and Tunisia. This version does not include the report on Morocco.

1. ALGERIA

Overview

Since 2000, there have been a large number of seizures of cannabis resin in Algeria. The trend in the first half of 2012 compared with the same period in the previous year shows a 129.10 % increase in the quantity of cannabis resin seized by the Algerian enforcement authorities and customs staff in conjunction with the army units deployed in the country's border areas.

As a result, 71 482.013 kilograms of cannabis resin were seized in the first half of 2012, compared with the 31 201.76 kilograms seized in the first half of 2011. The significant increase is presumably due 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.

The amount of crop-growing activities detected fell by 99.85 % for cannabis plants. The quantities seized in the internal market, on Algerian territory, increased by 340.91 % and those for personal consumption fell by 28.08 %. Seizures for attempts to bring cannabis resin into Algeria also increased (by 68.30 %).

Most of these drugs were seized in the *Wilaya* of Tlemcen, which is in north-western Algeria on the border with Morocco and an area in which large quantities of drugs are transported using traditional means: on pack animals, on foot in backpacks, or in vehicles, in loads of under 200 kilograms.

The Tlemcen route is replacing the Béchar and Tindouf route, representing a shift northwards in drug trafficking trends. This has been linked with the instability in northern Mali and the subsequent strengthening of border controls in these *Wilayas*, although cannabis trafficking persists there, as demonstrated by the most recent seizure of 3.8 tonnes of hashish in Béchar on 9 September.

As in previous periods, seizures of the substance have continued along Algeria's coast (562 kilograms). Seizures for the whole of 2011 amounted to 343.520 kilograms.

The routes used by drug trafficking networks coincide with those used for human trafficking and organised crime, which suggests that the latter operations are increasingly being used to back up the former.

In terms of seizures, psychotropic substances come in second place after cannabis, and though there was a slight increase of 0.87% in the quantity seized compared with the first half of 2011, it remained significant – 262 074 pills – owing to its direct impact on consumption within Algeria.

Compared with 2011, there was a marked increase in the prevalence of cocaine and heroin in the first half of 2012 (790.11% increase for cocaine and 330.79% increase for heroin). These substances were mainly seized from nationals of sub-Saharan origin in transit to Europe.

There are continued reports of cargo aircraft transporting cocaine from Latin America to the Sahel region, which is in line with the conclusions of the 2011 INCB report. The gradual establishment of storage facilities in countries on the edge of the Sahel for cocaine in transit must therefore be considered an ongoing emerging threat.

The instability in this region is growing as a result of emerging conflicts such as the conflict over the Azawad region in Mali, and the incipient activity of various terrorist structures such as MOJWA, whose area of operations includes the cocaine entry route of West Africa, and Ansar Dine, whose area of operations overlaps with that of AQIM, for whom the kidnapping of Westerners and links with organised crime, including drug trafficking, are the main sources of financing.

Given the clear link between terrorism and organised crime, it is worth noting that Algeria has strengthened its legislation on anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism.

Finally, with regard to consumption, statistics published in February 2012 by the Algerian police (DGSN) show that there were 300 000 drug addicts between the ages of 14 and 35, of which 45 % were women.

International cooperation

Algeria is part of the MedNET Euro-Mediterranean cooperation network (Pompidou Group, Council of Europe), which was set up in 2006 with the aim of developing north-south cooperation plans and activities in order to combat drugs. Other members include France, Italy, Lebanon, Morocco, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Tunisia.

As in previous periods, the fact that France, Greece, Italy and Spain have been identified as destination countries for drugs means that closer analysis is needed of the foreign currency trafficking generated by illegal activities and of the way in which such money is returning to the networks involved.

Recommendations

- Increase cooperation on training, operations and prevention to address the use of drugs and psychotropic substances, and step up cooperation on treating addiction.
- Propose amending Algeria's code of criminal procedure to accommodate coordination mechanisms for developing controlled deliveries, in order to identify the structure of the networks operating at the points of departure, transit and final destination of drugs, and enable comprehensive action to be taken.

- Boost international coordination mechanisms for anti-drug operations in the Mediterranean, with particular emphasis on money-laundering as the legislation in this area has recently changed.

2. EGYPT

Overview

The main drug seizure operations carried out in Egypt since January 2012 are as follows:

- Hashish: This is the most commonly used and most widespread drug in Egypt, which is a consumer but not a producer country. Hashish generally comes from Morocco and enters Egypt through the desert on the western border with Libya. Groups of Bedouins operating on both sides of the border control the smuggling networks and over the last two years have taken advantage of the volatile security situation in the area following the Egyptian Revolution of 25 January 2011 and the Libyan conflict. Ten tonnes of hashish destined to enter Egypt via this route have been seized so far this year. On the other hand, there has been a huge drop in Libyan hashish entering via the Red Sea ports. Seizures amounted to 70 kg in 2011, but so far this year no hashish is known to have entered by this route. It also seems that Afghan hashish is disappearing from the local market. However, in April 2011 an operation was carried out that resulted in the seizure of three tonnes from a boat sailing the Red Sea on its way from Pakistan to Egypt.
- Marijuana: The Egyptian government has been combating the illicit cultivation of marijuana for years. Crops are mainly grown in the Sinai peninsula and, to a lesser extent, in the Upper Nile. Problems related to the elevated terrain and the network of tribes, particularly in Sinai, complicate the job of the Egyptian security forces. Marijuana is grown for local consumption and the Egyptian authorities have seized around 70 tonnes since January 2012.

- Medication: The illicit distribution and consumption of Tramadol, by means other than under medical prescription from a pharmacy, is a particular focus of the local authorities in Egypt. So far this year, the authorities have seized around 385 million Tramadol pills stored in containers originating from India or China and entering Egypt through ports such as Suez, Port Said or Ain Sukhna. ANGA is planning to train the port authorities so that they can intercept these shipments more effectively.
- Heroin: Egypt is a consumer though not a producer country. Heroin enters the country via the eastern border, ports and airports. Sixty-two kilos have been seized since January 2012, eight of which were discovered recently at Cairo International Airport. The Egyptian authorities have arrested Syrian, Lebanese and Egyptian nationals in connection with the airport seizure.
- Opium: Opium is grown in Sinai and the Upper Nile during winter. ANGA is organising an eradication campaign with the support of the Air Force. The main consumers are older people who continue to follow local traditions, and haulage drivers seeking to stay awake at the wheel. Thirty-nine kilos have been seized since January 2012.
- Cocaine: Because cocaine is expensive, its consumption is limited to affluent segments of society and tourist areas. Around half a kilo has been seized since January 2012.
- Synthetic drugs: As with cocaine, the use of synthetic drugs, ecstasy and some hypnotics is not very widespread and is limited to wealthy people and tourist areas.

International cooperation

The Egyptian authorities expressed their willingness to work with European countries to combat drug trafficking, in particular through the use of controlled deliveries.

3. LIBYA

Overview

The drug control situation in Libya has not changed since the last meeting of the mini Dublin group. As stated in previous reports, the lack of technical resources, and of operational and administrative procedures for combating drugs means that the situation has not improved compared with previous periods.

One of the biggest obstacles is the scarcity of information available. The real situation is unknown because there are no reliable data to provide an overview of the current circumstances or of the possible trends in drug crime.

As stated in previous reports, Libya is not a producer country, but the Libyan authorities still consider it to be a transit country and a victim of its geographical location, used by traffickers as a platform or a transit country for drugs on their way to other destinations.

The types of drugs identified as the most significant because of the problems they cause are heroin, cocaine, ecstasy and hashish. Hashish is the most widely used amongst the Libyan population.

The permeability of the Libyan borders creates the ideal setting for these substances to travel into and out of the country. Although there are no official data, it seems that the major entry point into Libya is over the Nigerian border from Central and West Africa. It also seems that smuggling over the Egyptian and Tunisian borders may have increased significantly because these locations have thus far been poorly monitored by the Libyan authorities.

The launch of flights between the Libyan capital and a number of European airports has also enabled drug trafficking to Europe to increase.

Furthermore, the revolutionary militia absorbed or integrated into the Ministry of the Interior, creating the security force known as the Supreme Security Committee, are now operationally responsible for combating drugs.

In September operations were carried out against drug trafficking that led to the seizure of 1 200 kg of hashish and LYD 300 000. The operation headed by the Supreme Security Committee clearly illustrates the situation. Information regarding the operation has not been shared at any institutional level, and it also seems that some of the confiscated drugs may have re-entered the market.

The institution officially responsible for combating drugs is ANGA (Libyan drug enforcement agency). However, as explained above, anti-drug operations are carried out by other security forces (Supreme Security Committee).

Under the previous regime, ANGA functioned autonomously. Hierarchically, it reported to the Ministry of Defence but in reality it was a functionally independent body. Most of its members disappeared or were arrested after the events arising from the February 2011 Revolution.

ANGA currently comprises approximately 2 700 members, although it clearly lacks training, capacity and operational procedures.

As well as drug enforcement and policing, in the period before the revolution ANGA was also responsible for dealing with people arrested for drug-related offences and detained in special centres.

Other ministries, specifically the Libyan Ministry of Health, are currently attempting to introduce certain changes to the strategies used in the fight against drugs, such as the involvement of other public bodies in combating the growth in drug consumption, particularly among young Libyans.

Recommendations

- Reinforce international cooperation through training and technical instruction programmes for the officials involved in the fight against drug trafficking and organise exchanges of experiences in this field.
- Strengthen the channels for exchanging information as a basic pillar of international cooperation, with a particular emphasis on regional cooperation and cooperation with Mediterranean countries. In this connection, more detailed information should be made available on drug seizures as a result of police operations and on the anti-drug units.
- Expand the sources of funding for professional training programmes for young people.
- Develop training courses to assist in the fight against trafficking in human beings and money laundering.
- Establish horizontal strategies in the fight against drugs, with the involvement of other agencies and ministries such as the Ministries of Health and Education.
- Increase the number of drug prevention programmes in educational institutions.
- Develop multidisciplinary rehabilitation programmes for drug addicts.
- Establish stable channels for international cooperation, with a particular emphasis on European countries.
- Set up intelligence units with the capacity to analyse the current situation and to identify trends and possible future scenarios.

4. MAURITANIA

Overview

Mauritania is regarded as a transit country for cocaine heading for Europe and for cannabis from Morocco bound for the Arab Peninsula and the Eastern Mediterranean. We would highlight the significant seizure of 2.5 tonnes of cannabis by the gendarmerie in January, though there have been no major seizures since then.

We surmise that the country's geographical position, its trading relations with surrounding areas, and the inadequacy of its customs controls and law enforcement measures make Mauritania an ideal location for drug trafficking, but there are no reliable statistics available to confirm this assumption.

There is no tradition of growing or processing drugs in Mauritania. Local consumption is confined to herbal cannabis, which is used for traditional practices (Indian hemp). There are concerns, however, that the increase in the amount of cocaine in transit could lead to a rise in consumption in certain circles.

The security operations undertaken by the security forces as part of the fight against terrorism may also be useful in combating drug trafficking in that they hinder the transit of drugs through the country, particularly in the case of cocaine. This is especially true since security at the land borders with Mali was reinforced. However, it would appear that the political fragility in Mali since March 2012, and the dependence on the proceeds of drug trafficking of the forces in the north of the country, have resulted in drug circuits in Mauritania being displaced to Mali.

Although Mauritania is a party to three United Nations Conventions, the measures adopted against drug trafficking are essentially aimed at maintaining national security in view of the links between the fight against terrorism and trafficking in the Sahel region. In this connection, the Mauritanian security forces set up 34 permanent police posts and 100 mobile units in 2012.

At the beginning of 2012 an international cannabis trafficking network that operated between Morocco and Mali, via Mauritania, was dismantled and 2.5 tonnes of cannabis were seized. This seizure underlines the fact that Mauritania remains a transit country for cannabis from Morocco. The limited amount of Indian hemp seized may also be an indicator of the effectiveness of the reinforced security at the border with Mali.

Since the end of 2011 the Mauritanian authorities have stepped up their measures against the distribution and consumption of alcoholic beverages. Two major operations were carried out, one in April and another in June.

International cooperation

The project run by Spain's *Guardia Civil* to reinforce the dog brigade, which was launched by France in 2010, is continuing. After the initial training in the detection of drugs and explosives for 12 master dogs, there will be refresher courses every three months throughout 2012. From September to December 2012, the Spanish national police will be providing training in the detection of forged documents in Nouadhibou.

For 2012, France has earmarked EUR 71 375 for the purchase of 3 quads, personal equipment and computers, as well as training for officers involved in investigations. In addition, France, the European Union and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) are funding the construction and equipping of border posts, which will also be used to combat drug trafficking. France also supports the institutional reform currently being carried out with a view to organising the departments involved in the fight against drugs more effectively. In October 2012 in Conakry the Priority Solidarity Fund will launch the ALCAO programme to combat cocaine trafficking in West Africa.

Another priority is to provide logistical support for the bodies responsible for combating illegal trafficking (police, gendarmerie and customs), particularly as regards training for staff on the ground, who tend to have insufficient knowledge about illegal drugs. This is the objective pursued by the European Commission's West Sahel programme in the field of migration and asylum, and also covered by the thematic programme of cooperation with third countries, co-financed and managed by the tax and border department of Spain's *Guardia Civil*, the beneficiaries of which are Niger, Mali, Senegal and Mauritania. In 2012, the EU will provide EUR 16 million in funding for forensic projects in West Africa and Mauritania.

The United States also provides regular training to the Mauritanian police and gendarmerie, including a course on border control in March 2012 and a course on maritime interdiction in June 2012. It also supplies equipment (trucks, night vision binoculars, GPS systems, walkie-talkies, etc.) and has taken steps to help the Mauritanian authorities to introduce community policing and a free emergency telephone number.

In 2011, Mauritania's forensic services were represented at the regional seminar for forensic institutes in West Africa organised by UNODC under the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan on illicit drug trafficking. UNODC is also preparing a programme of technical assistance in the fight against money laundering and plans to organise a course on this subject in cooperation with the Financial Information Analysis Commission (CANIF). UNODC also supports the Mauritanian government within the framework of the integrated national programme on combating illicit drug trafficking, organised crime and financing of terrorism, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of the criminal justice and police system and contributing to reducing the demand for drugs and preventing AIDs.

Recommendations

Mauritania has no overall vision on drugs trafficking at either local or international level, which makes it difficult to draw up a strategy to combat the problem. The current structure of the Central Office for Combating Illegal Trafficking in Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (OCLCTISS) does not sufficiently ensure the centralisation of information; the gendarmerie and customs authorities do not report systematically on drugs issues. As a result, the OCLCTISS lacks information on the full extent of drugs trafficking.

The Mauritanian authorities are not aware of the international impact of trafficking; they do not liaise with their counterparts in neighbouring countries and do not use the Interpol networks.

The mini Dublin Group has identified a problem in the organisation of investigations. The authorities do not ensure that cases of trafficking are followed up or conduct subsequent analysis of the drugs seized. There are also significant shortcomings at judicial level. The Public Prosecutor should play an important role in controlling and coordinating the police and gendarmerie, supplementing cooperation at operational level. The judges, investigators and the bodies responsible for surveillance of the financial system and the health and pharmaceutical sectors require specialised training.

Mauritania's needs remain significant in all areas, from staff training to logistical support. There are ongoing requests for technical equipment for surveillance, transmission, investigation and toxicological analyses from both the Mauritanian police and the gendarmerie. Training courses are an absolute priority, starting with those for instructors in the National Training Unit for Combating Drugs and Drug Addiction (UNAFDT), set up in 1997.

Recommendations

We therefore make the following recommendations:

- Continue to raise the awareness of the Mauritanian authorities of the need to step up their commitment to the fight against drug trafficking and against the laundering of the proceeds of trafficking.
- Encourage and support the creation of a national drug trafficking database, into which data would be entered by the police, the customs authorities and the gendarmerie.
- Propose the integration of all the bodies with responsibility in the fight against illegal trafficking and appoint one or more gendarmes as liaison officials in the OCCLCTISS.
- Support the framing of a national anti-drug trafficking policy on that basis.
- Improve and optimise the material resources of Mauritania's security forces with responsibility in this area.
- Support the improvement noted in the capacity to detect tax fraud and drug money laundering and to carry out surveillance of the financial system, continuing the work plan initiated under the bilateral cooperation agreement with France.

- Propose that it be made mandatory for banks to report suspicious transactions to the CANIF, raise awareness among the heads of financial institutions, and examine the possibility of exchanging information with the Central Bank of Mauritania on reports of substantial sums of money entering Group countries.
- Improve effective border control capacity and, in this connection, encourage implementation of the Instrument for Stability.
- Set in motion training for all those involved in the judicial chain (police, gendarmes, prosecutors and judges) combating drug trafficking.
- Ensure the continuity of training by establishing a permanent training centre with specialised and professional training personnel. Place particular emphasis on the training of trainers. Promote specialisation amongst officers from the time they join the security forces.
- Minimise training stays in Group countries.
- Promote a framework for regional cooperation, reinforce the work of the platform of liaison officers for West Africa, based in Dakar, encourage an evaluation by the national office of Interpol and boost its capacity as a means of stepping up international cooperation.
- Build upon the progress made in exchanges with European counterparts in Mauritania on operational, tactical and strategic issues and foment exchanges between experts and specialists.

5. TUNISIA

Overview

We maintain the hypothesis, put forward in previous reports, that Tunisia is not a drug producing country, but rather a transit country for the trafficking of moderate amounts of cannabis to Europe. In the absence of reliable data on consumption, drug use would not appear to be a major problem.

In the first half of 2012, the Tunisian security forces seized 2 042 kg of hashish, of which 180 kg were washed up on various beaches, 52 kg were seized in police operations in Jendouba and Bizerta, and 665 kg were discovered in southern Tunisia in a truck bound for Libya. 12 800 pills containing psychotropic substances were also seized.

According to official sources in the Ministry of the Interior, there were 823 police operations against drug trafficking in the first six months of 2012, involving a total of 1 612 persons.

As stated in previous reports, cannabis is the most widely consumed drug in Tunisia. The Tunisian customs authorities seized 61 grams of cocaine in 2011. The price of cocaine, which ranges from 160 to 200 dinars per gram, is too high for local consumers.

The police have observed an increase in thefts from pharmacy warehouses, with SUBUTEX, which is used as a substitute for opiates, being the medicine most frequently targeted.

The country is currently going through a period of considerable regulatory and legislative change, but for the time being the country's drugs legislation has not been repealed or amended, and Law 92/52 of 18 May 1992 continues to apply.

International cooperation

In May 2012, a seminar on addiction prevention was held in the Pasteur Institute of Tunis, organised by the Council of Europe (Pompidou Group) and the Tunisian Ministry of Health. The Ministry of Health announced the launch of a master's degree in drug addiction studies in the medical faculty of Tunis in an attempt to approximate the legal and medical approaches to the problem of drug dependence.

Despite many requests for information by different attachés, no general information, statistics or other data have been made available to date on this issue; for the first time, however, it would appear that some limited data on drug seizures have been provided to liaison officials from the German federal police.

Recommendations

Given the lack of information on the internal situation, it is difficult to make recommendations as we do not know if the fight against drugs is being conducted effectively or not.

- The first recommendation is therefore to promote transparency of information, so as to allow a full picture to be obtained 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 the exchange of information between the various security services so as to allow more effective coordination of the fight against drug trafficking.
- Promote the participation of members of the Tunisian security forces in international seminars, and provide technical assistance and operational support in this field.
- Reform the legal framework using a coherent inter-sectoral approach based on human rights and the effectiveness of the fight against drugs.