

PREVENTIVE AND DETERRENT MEASURES FOR ALGERIAN LEGISLATORS TO COMBAT THE SCOURGE OF DRUGS AND HALLUCINOGENS

LOGHLAM AZZOUZ¹

¹University of ghardaia (Algeria).

The E-mail Author: loghlam.azzouz@univ-ghardaia.dz¹,

Received: 05/2024

Published: 11/2024

Abstract

This study examines Algerian legislation on drugs and hallucinogenic substances, the phenomenon of their influx into the country and the increase in drug-related crime, as well as the measures taken by the state to combat this scourge. Algeria has moved from being a transit zone for drugs to a consumption zone, as evidenced by the crimes and cases dealt with by the security services in recent years. This is also confirmed by a field study carried out by the National Office for the Fight against Drugs and Addiction, which examined the number of Algerians using drugs and the age groups most affected by these substances.

In recent years, Algerian security forces have seized significant quantities of drugs, including cocaine, indicating a serious increase in the use of these deadly substances. In order to combat this problem, Algeria has taken a number of preventive measures and has set up treatment and rehabilitation centres to ensure that addicts receive proper medical care and treatment. Disciplinary and penal legislation has also been adopted, as set out in various articles of Law No. 23-05. Coordination with the relevant international and regional organisations has also been established to prevent the entry of these poisons into the country and to avoid its use as a transit, consumption or trafficking area.

Keywords: *Drugs; Preventive and deterrent measures; Legislation.*

INTRODUCTION

It is widely recognised that drugs are toxic substances and that they are a serious phenomenon that is growing every day. It is agreed that drug trafficking is a global crime, no longer confined to one country or another. This dangerous scourge undermines and corrupts societies and, because of its complexity and pervasiveness, causes destruction and loss. Today, we see and hear of international criminal organisations promoting and trafficking these deadly substances.

Drug-related crimes have an impact on the economies of countries through the massive resources allocated to combating them, including expenditure on coastguards, customs, various security services and rehabilitation programmes, awareness-raising initiatives and diagnostics, among others. Algeria, like all countries, is not immune to this phenomenon. However, the Algerian state has taken strict measures against drugs and psychotropic substances. It has stepped up surveillance at all ports and border crossings - land, air and sea - in order to eradicate these toxic substances. This includes a range of measures, such as preventive, therapeutic, disciplinary and punitive, which we will discuss in this article. We will also provide some real-life examples of how Algeria has detected these harmful substances and arrested their traffickers.

In the first section, we will define the concepts of drugs and hallucinogenic substances in Algerian law. In the second section, we will look at the preventive, disciplinary and punitive measures taken by the Algerian state to prevent drugs from entering the country.

First topic: The concept of drugs and hallucinogenic substances in Algerian law

Section One: Definition of narcotic substances and related terminology

Article 2 of Law No. 04-18¹ defines the following:

¹- Law 04-18 dated Dhul-Qi'dah 13, 1425 (December 25, 2004), concerning the prevention of drugs and psychotropic substances and the suppression of their illegal use and trafficking.

Subsection one: definition of narcotic substances.

1. Synthetic narcotic substances:

- a) Narcotics: Any natural or synthetic substance listed in Schedules I and II of the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, as amended by the 1972 Protocol.
- (b) Psychotropic substances: Any natural or synthetic substance or natural product listed in Schedules I, II, III or IV to the 1971 United Nations Convention on Psychotropic Substances.
- (c) precursors: Any chemical product used in the manufacture of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances.
- (d) Preparation: Any solid or liquid mixture containing a narcotic or psychotropic substance.

2. Cultivated narcotic substances:

- (a) Cannabis: The flowering or fruiting tops of the cannabis plant (excluding seeds and non-fruiting leaves) from which the resin has not been extracted, irrespective of its use.
- (b) Cannabis plant: Any plant of the genus Cannabis.
- (c) Opium poppy: any shrub of the genus Mohn which produces opium.
- (d) Coca plant: any species of shrub of the genus Erythroxylum.

Subsection Two: Other Related Terminology

1. Definitions of use, dependence and treatment:

- a) Illicit use: Personal use of controlled narcotics or psychotropic substances without a medical prescription¹.
- b) Addiction: A state of psychological or physical dependence on a narcotic or psychotropic substance.
- c) Treatment for addiction: Treatment aimed at eliminating psychological or physical dependence on a narcotic or psychotropic substance.

Subsection Two: Other Related Terminology

- (a) Cultivation: refers to the cultivation of opium poppy, coca bushes and cannabis plants.
- (b) Production: The process of extracting opium, coca leaves, cannabis and cannabis resin from their plants.
- (c) Manufacture: All processes, other than production, by which narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances are obtained, including purification and conversion of narcotic drugs into other narcotic drugs.
- (d) Export and import: The physical movement of narcotic drugs and/or psychotropic substances from one country to another.
- (e) Transport: The movement of controlled substances within Algerian territory from one place to another or through transit.
- (f) Transit State: The State through whose territory narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and substances listed in Schedules I and II are illegally transported, neither from their original source nor from their final destination.

Section Two: Experts' views on drugs and the rise in crime

Abdel Hakim Abidat, president of the National Association for Youth Care (a civil society organisation), links the influx of drugs into Algeria to the increase in drug-related crime, particularly among people aged between 15 and 35. This observation is supported by activists within the association who work with addicts and their families. It is also supported by incidents such as six murders committed by addicts, including the killing of a young man by an addict in the Qaidy neighbourhood of Borj El Kifane, east of the capital, in June 2020².

A study entitled "Drug use and its relation to the development of crime in Algerian society" found that the most common crimes linked to drug use were: theft (36%), violence (harmful behaviour towards others, whether physical, psychological or verbal) (16%), assault (harmful or dangerous

¹- Law No. 04-18, previous reference.

²- Abdelhafid Sajal, "Drug Use in Algeria: A Direct Correlation Between Consumption and Rising Crime," Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, May 28, 2023, Algeria.

contact, including physical, such as sexual assault, or moral offences affecting individual dignity and freedom) (10%), homicide (7%) and physical abuse (assault causing harm to the victim) (6%).

In 2021, the number of crimes and cases dealt with by the police reached 296,000, involving 274,000 people, with 201,000 victims. This information was provided by the Inspector General of National Security, Haj Said Arziki, during a press conference held on 10 February 2022, highlighting a 14.71% increase in the crime rate compared to 2020.

Algeria took a heavy toll in 2022 in terms of drug trafficking and hallucinogenic substances. According to the National Office for the Fight against Drugs and Addiction, cocaine consumption in the country rose by 200% in 2022, while the use of other hallucinogenic substances increased by more than 100%. Security forces arrested 1,600 drug dealers and seized more than 10 million hallucinogenic tablets, tonnes of “processed cannabis” and dozens of kilograms of cocaine¹.

A field study carried out by the National Office for the Fight against Drugs and Addiction found that more than 3 million Algerians, 3% of whom are women, consume and use drugs, including psychoactive substances. According to official figures given by the President of the National Organisation for Youth Care, Abdel Karim Abidat, the number of people addicted to hallucinogens in treatment centres exceeds 700,000, but the real figure could be as high as one million. The most affected age group is between 20 and 30 years old.

Abidat noted that “pregabalin” pills, colloquially known as “the rocket”, are the most common among hallucinogen addicts, accounting for up to 80% compared to other psychoactive substances. He also revealed that the use of hallucinogenic pills ranks first, followed by processed cannabis and “chouchna”, while hard drugs such as heroin and cocaine are limited to a small group, mostly from wealthy families.

Nuri Drees, a professor of political sociology, said that drugs and hallucinogens are a conspiracy in themselves, increasingly used as a weapon between states and gangs. They have become a major source of profit and a means of undermining countries, burdening them with security problems and trapping their youth in addiction².

Second topic: Preventive, Disciplinary and Punitive Measures

Section One: Strategy and Procedures

Security expert Mezab argues that security measures alone are not enough; a comprehensive, participatory approach is needed to combat this threat. This includes activating the foundations that create awareness and establish a prevention and immunity system against these toxins in schools, homes and religious institutions, as well as promoting social awareness through the media.

The authorities state that they have resorted to new tools, different from those previously used to raise community awareness, by using the media to discuss the harms and risks of addiction to individuals and society.

Algeria has made progress in adopting a strategy to combat the illicit use of drugs and psychotropic substances. The country is currently witnessing a nationwide campaign to warn of the dangers of drug and hallucinogen use, which has reached educational institutions, mosques and cultural centres, as well as the organisation of open days on national radio.

To empower youth and society against this scourge, Parliament has approved a draft law on the prevention of the use of drugs and psychotropic substances and the prohibition of their illicit trafficking. This law provides for an in-depth review of the strategies adopted to combat the use of drugs and the illicit use of psychotropic substances, protects pharmacists from attacks by addicts and imposes severe penalties on those involved in the trafficking of drugs and psychotropic substances, with prison sentences of up to 30 years.

¹- Mohamed Selhani, "The Most Notorious: The Rocket, The Taxi, and The Red One," Hallucinogens Are a Serious Threat to Algeria, Al Jazeera Net Reporters, Al Jazeera, May 17, 2023.

²- Mohamed Selhani, same reference.

The Algerian legislature has also sought to increase the penalties for those who contribute to drug use. For example, Article 13 of the Law on Combating Drugs provides for an effective prison sentence of up to 10 years for those who promote these harmful substances¹.

Subsection One: Preventive measures

Article 5 bis of Law No. 23-05² states that the State shall draw up a national strategy for the prevention of drugs and psychotropic substances, which shall include, in particular

- The general and specific objectives of the strategy.
- The role of the Office in coordinating the work of all stakeholders.
- Mechanisms and instruments for coordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Prevention and awareness of the risks associated with drugs and psychotropic substances.
- Mechanisms to combat the phenomenon of addiction, especially among young people, and to protect educational and training establishments.
- Reducing the supply of and demand for drugs and psychotropic substances and their social and health consequences.
- International cooperation and coordination of efforts with international and regional organisations and other countries.

In addition, Article³ 5 bis 2 outlines the role of the Office in coordination with various ministerial sectors and civil society actors, which includes:

- Collecting and centralising information on drug and psychotropic substance prevention.
- Coordination between the various actors in this field.
- Analysing indicators related to drugs and psychotropic substances in order to help public authorities make appropriate decisions in this field.
- Developing guidelines for the prevention of illegal use and trafficking of drugs and psychotropic substances.

The Office also oversees the various sectoral programmes being developed in this area, including:

- Establishment of guidelines for the identification of groups at higher risk of drug and psychotropic substance abuse.
- Preparation of an annual national report on the prevention of and the fight against the illicit use of and trafficking in drugs and psychotropic substances in Algeria, to be submitted to the President of the Republic.
- Maintaining a database on the measures taken at national and local level to prevent and combat the illicit use of and trafficking in drugs and psychotropic substances.

Article 5, paragraph 3, outlines key points regarding the State's actions to combat drug abuse, such as:

- The obligation of public administrations, institutions and local communities, in coordination with the Office, to develop joint sectoral programmes for the prevention of the illicit use of and trafficking in drugs and psychotropic substances, derived from the national strategy. These programmes should take into account
 - Raising awareness of the effects of drugs and psychotropic substances.
 - Activating the role of educational and training institutions in raising awareness and educating about the risks of illegal drug use and trafficking, their impact on health, school performance and the spread of violence in society.
 - Strengthening the role of mosques, cultural centres, sports facilities and youth centres in raising awareness of the dangers of drugs and psychotropic substances.
 - Providing psychological and educational support and follow-up for addicts.

¹- Abdelhafid Sajal, "Article 17 and the Drug War: Challenges Not Achieved by Strict Penalties," June 14, 2023, Algeria.

²- Law 23-05, dated Shawwal 17, 1444 (May 7, 2023), amending and supplementing Law No. 04-18, dated Dhul-Qi'dah 13, 1425 (December 25, 2004), concerning the prevention of drugs and psychotropic substances and the suppression of their illegal use and trafficking.

³- Law No. 23-05, previous reference.

Civil society is also involved in the preparation and implementation of the national strategy and joint sectoral programmes for the prevention of illicit drug use and trafficking in psychotropic substances. Articles 5 and 6 stipulate that the State is responsible for the protection, care and medical and psychological assistance of drug and psychotropic addicts through civil society organisations working in this field, and for their reintegration into society¹.

In addition, the Algerian State stresses the obligation of pharmacists to notify the competent health authorities immediately of any prescriptions that do not comply with the regulations in force. According to articles 5 to 7 of the same law, the pharmacist is exempt from prosecution if the report is inconclusive.

Subsection Two: Disciplinary and Punitive Measures

Among the punitive and disciplinary measures against drug traffickers and users, Article 12 of the same law states:

> “Anyone who unlawfully consumes, purchases or possesses narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances for personal use shall be punished by imprisonment for a term ranging from two months to two years and a fine ranging from DZD 20,000 to DZD 50,000, or by one of these penalties”.

In addition, Article 16 of the same law states²:

> “Anyone who intentionally prepares a forged medical prescription containing narcotics or psychotropic substances, or who issues a prescription in violation of the established regulations, shall be punished by imprisonment for a term of between two and ten years and a fine of between DZD 200,000 and DZD 1,000,000. This applies to anyone who

- Supplies narcotics or psychotropic substances without a medical prescription or with a prescription that does not meet the established standards.

> obtains narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances for the purpose of sale or attempts to obtain them with prescriptions that do not comply with the regulations in force”.

With regard to drug traffickers, Article 16 bis states

> Whoever intentionally promotes narcotics and/or psychotropic substances by any means shall be punished by imprisonment for between five and ten years and a fine of between DZD 500,000 and DZD 1,000,000. The penalty increases to imprisonment for ten to twenty years and a fine of DZD 1,000,000 to 2,000,000 if the offence is committed by exploiting minors, persons with disabilities or persons undergoing treatment for addiction in educational, training, health or social institutions or in public or open institutions”³.

Penalties are increased if minors, persons with disabilities or persons undergoing treatment for addiction are exploited in any of the above-mentioned centres or institutions. This demonstrates the Algerian state’s commitment to protecting all sections of society from falling prey to criminal drug traffickers.

Furthermore, the Algerian legislator states in Article 17:

> “Anyone who unlawfully produces, manufactures, sells, offers for sale, obtains, possesses, displays or purchases, with the intention of selling, stores, extracts, prepares, distributes, delivers, brokers or transports narcotic or psychotropic substances in any form shall be punished by imprisonment for a term ranging from ten to twenty years and a fine ranging from DZD 5,000,000 to DZD 50,000,000”. The offences referred to in the previous paragraph shall be punishable by temporary imprisonment of between twenty (20) and thirty (30) years if the perpetrator is a public official whose position has facilitated the commission of the offence, or a health professional, a pharmacist, an employee of an institution specialising in the treatment of addiction, or a member of an organisation working to prevent the illegal use of and trafficking in drugs and psychotropic substances.

In this context, a “public official” is defined as any person holding a legislative, executive, judicial or administrative position, or serving in an elected local council, whether appointed or elected,

¹- Law No. 23-05, previous reference.

²- Law No. 23-05, previous reference.

³- Law No. 23-05, previous reference.

permanent or temporary, paid or unpaid, regardless of rank or seniority, as well as any other person recognised as a public official or similar under applicable laws and regulations.

In addition, the above-mentioned acts are punishable by life imprisonment when committed by an organised criminal group. Attempts to commit the offences described in this article shall be punishable by the penalties prescribed for the completed offence.

Recent figures from the National Office for the Fight against Drugs highlight the seriousness of the threat these substances pose to Algerian society. The annual report for 2022 indicates the seizure of more than 58 tonnes of cannabis, 58.87% of which was seized in the western part of the country. According to the Ministry of Defence, a significant amount of smuggled cannabis entering Algeria comes from Morocco¹.

Section Two: Statistics on drugs and hallucinogens seized

According to the report of the National Office for the Fight against Drugs:

- Cannabis Seizures: 33.18% of cannabis seizures were recorded in the southern region of the country, 4.79% in the eastern region and 3.16% in the central region.
- Cocaine seizures: The amount of cocaine seized in Algeria decreased by 87.94% in 2022 compared with 2021. Cocaine is often smuggled from Spain to Algeria via Morocco or directly from Madrid to Algeria by sea. In May 2022, Spanish authorities reported the seizure of 322 kilograms of cocaine in a southern port bound for Algeria.
- Specific incidents: Spanish media reported that customs authorities, in coordination with police, found cocaine in 16 bags in a container carrying maize seeds from Brazil to the port of Oran, Algeria. In 2018, a shipment of seven quintals of cocaine was seized at the port of Oran, known as the 'Kamal Bouchi case', which led to the dismissal and imprisonment of senior officials.
- Recent discoveries: On 28 July 2023, the judicial police of Algiers, acting on information received from the national security services, discovered 35.9 kilograms of cocaine hidden on board a foreign vessel docked at the port of Algiers. After a thorough inspection coordinated with the coastguard, this quantity of cocaine was seized².

Global drug use statistics:

The alarming statistics from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's 2022 annual report show that around 284 million people worldwide use drugs. The users are aged between 15 and 64 and represent around 5.6% of the world's population, an increase of 26% since 2010, partly due to global population growth³.

The report also highlights an increase in the methods used to smuggle drugs, including land and sea routes and the use of private jets. In 2019, drug use resulted in nearly half a million deaths worldwide, with 70% of these deaths attributed to opioid use and 30% to overdoses.

Cannabis remains the most widely used drug in the world. According to the World Drug Report 2021, Morocco is the leading producer and exporter of cannabis, which was grown illegally until it was regulated for medical and industrial use in 2021. The National Agency for the Regulation of Cannabis Activities has reportedly issued 50 licences for this purpose.

Subsection One: Algeria: from drug transit country to drug user country

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime report, Algeria has changed from a transit country for drugs to a consumption area, mainly supplied by six countries, including two from Latin America and four from Africa⁴. According to the report, drug use affects even schoolchildren, with consumption rates ranging from 15% to 17%, 22% to 23% among high school students and 27% among university students⁵.

¹- Abdelhafid Sajal, "Article 17 and the Drug War: Challenges Not Achieved by Strict Penalties," June 14, 2023, Algeria.

²- Discovery of 35.9 kg of cocaine aboard a foreign ship at the port of Algiers, Algerian News Agency, reported on Saturday, July 29, 2023, 22:41, Algeria.

³- Majid Sarrah, "The Drug Problem in Numbers," Al-Shorouk, April 30, 2023, 1227, Algeria.

⁴- Majid Sarrah, same reference.

⁵- Same reference.

In Algeria, according to 2022 data from the National Office for the Fight against Drugs and Addiction, various substances are prevalent, including cannabis, cocaine, crack, heroin, opium and psychotropic substances. The office recorded 23,463 cases related to drug trafficking and illegal trade, 73,285 cases related to possession and use, and 49 cases related to cultivation of cannabis and opium.

In terms of addicts in treatment, the National Office for the Fight against Drugs and Addiction reported a 37.93% increase in the number of addicts in 2022 compared to 2021, with a notable 140.20% increase in female addicts over the same period.

Subsection Two: Efforts by governmental institutions to prevent and combat drugs

International drug control conventions

1. Algeria's international commitments:

- Algeria acceded to international drug control conventions by Decree 63/343 of 11 September 1963.

- It acceded to the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Drugs in 1988 by Decree No. 95/41 of 28 January 1995.

2. Efforts to combat drugs:

- On 30 April 2002, the Director of International Cooperation at the National Office for the Fight against Drugs and Addiction, Judge Daoudi, confirmed that Algeria's fight against drug abuse was progressing on three fronts. He highlighted the authorities' efforts to strengthen the core of society - young people - through a multifaceted strategy based on education and quality training¹.

3. Strengthening international cooperation:

- Mr Daoudi noted that a system for monitoring drug shipments had been put in place, making it possible to trace narcotics and psychotropic substances entering the country, which was essential for dismantling the networks behind these activities. He stressed that the fight against drugs was a collective effort involving all segments of society, all ministries, government institutions and civil society organisations.

Judge Daoudi highlighted a worrying trend in drug use among Algerian adolescents, indicating an increase from 2.51% to 9.2%, with 7.2% using cannabis. He emphasised that teenagers are the group with the highest rate of use, at 3.61%.

Regarding the strategies implemented to curb the drug phenomenon, Daoudi explained that all the research carried out by the office and international recommendations have been integrated into three main strategies. He noted that efforts are being made to ensure quality health care for addicts and to provide them with treatment.

Global issues

A) The growing threat of cocaine production and trafficking

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime estimates that global illicit coca cultivation will increase from 156,500 hectares in 2015 to 234,200 hectares in 2020². In that year, Colombia had the largest area under illicit coca cultivation (143,000 hectares), followed by Peru (61,800 hectares) and Bolivia (29,400 hectares)³.

The annual prevalence rate of cocaine use among the world's adult population is estimated to be 0.4 % in 2020, a slight increase since 2010. However, due to population growth over this period, the number of cocaine users will increase to 21.5 million in 2020, a 32 % increase compared with 2010.

There are significant regional differences in the prevalence of cocaine use, ranging from 2.7 % in Oceania to just under 2 % in North America, 1.6 % in South America and 1.4 % in Western and Central

¹ "Algeria's Fight Against Drug Abuse Advances on Three Fronts," Algerian Radio, April 30, 2023, 11:20.

² International Narcotics Control Board, United Nations, International Narcotics Control Board Report 2022, p. 55. INCB. Vienna. International Centre. Room E-1339. P.O. Box 500. 1400 Vienna, Austria.

³ World Drug Report 2022, Booklet 4, Trends in the Drug Market: Cocaine, Opioid Stimulants, and New Psychoactive Substances (United Nations Publications, 2022), data related to the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru.

Europe¹. In contrast, the annual prevalence rate of cocaine use remains below the global average of 0.4 %² in eastern and south-eastern Europe, Africa and Asia.

B) Rapid movement of drugs and cocaine

Cocaine is transported from illicit laboratories in South America to consumers around the world through well-established routes. The main routes include

- Pacific route: From Colombia along the Pacific coast to Central America and/or Mexico, then to the United States³.

- Atlantic route: From the Andean region to ports in Europe for onward shipment to other countries.

- Brazil route: Through Brazil to Europe, either via the Atlantic Ocean or West Africa.

Significant quantities of cocaine, mainly from Colombia, are also sent to Australia by sea and air, with Mexico being the main point of departure for these shipments.

In Africa, which is used as a transit zone for cocaine shipments from South America to Europe, authorities have reported seizures of several tonnes of cocaine following a decline in the intensity of the COVID-19 pandemic. In April 2022, authorities seized 6 tonnes of cocaine on board a vessel in Cape Verdean territorial waters. In the same month, Côte d'Ivoire authorities seized more than 2 tonnes of the substance in Abidjan and San Pedro.

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's World Drug Report 2022, the estimated prevalence of cannabis use in Africa was 6.54% of the population (about 49.2 million people). For opioid substances, including prescription opioids, the estimated prevalence of use was 1.23 % (about 9.2 million people). For opioids, mainly heroin, the estimated prevalence of use was 0.49 % (3.6 million people). Consumption rates for other narcotic drugs in Africa did not exceed 0.3% of the population in 2020, and for many substances prevalence data were not available in certain subregions of Africa.

In 2021, Algeria established two methadone substitution treatment centres treating 100 patients. The government plans to expand the programme to treat a total of 320 patients by the end of 2023⁴.

CONCLUSION:

The issue of drugs and psychotropic substances, commonly known as hallucinogens, is a global problem that is on the rise. Algeria, like many other countries, is vigorously combating the presence of these harmful substances within its borders. It is imperative to combat this serious scourge by all legal means available.

This issue concerns all sectors of society, all ministries, government institutions and civil society organisations. Despite the preventive, deterrent and punitive measures taken by Algeria, the phenomenon of drug abuse continues to escalate. This has necessitated the adoption of various laws, such as Law No. 23-05 on the prevention of drug use and trafficking.

The relationship between drugs and crime in the country has led to an increase in criminal activities such as murder, theft, sexual assault and violence. According to statistics, the crime rate increased by 14.71% in 2021 compared to 2020, while the use of cocaine increased by 200% and the use of hallucinogens by 100%.

It has become clear that drugs and hallucinogens are being used as weapons between states and criminal gangs, emphasising that they represent a conspiracy against the country and its citizens, especially the young, who are the backbone of the nation. However, the State is determined to combat this problem by all legal means.

In order to combat this serious phenomenon, Algeria has put in place a number of preventive measures and mechanisms to combat it, in coordination and cooperation with international and regional organisations combating this scourge.

Measures to combat drug abuse:

¹- International Narcotics Control Board, previous reference, p. 55.

²- World Drug Report 2021, Booklet 4, subtitle "Global Cocaine Use," and Figure 13.

³- International Narcotics Control Board, same reference.

⁴- International Narcotics Control Board, previous reference.

Several measures have been taken to address the alarming problem of drug abuse:

- Activation of educational institutions: The role of educational and training institutions has been strengthened, as have mosques and sports and cultural centres. Centres for the psychological treatment and aftercare of drug addicts have also been set up.

- Tougher penalties: Penalties for drug users and traffickers have been increased, particularly for the exploitation of minors or people with disabilities. Sentences can be up to 20 years' imprisonment.

In particular, Algeria has moved from being a transit country for drugs to a consumer country, as highlighted in the UN Office report. According to data from the National Office for the Fight against Drugs and Addiction for 2022, the most widespread drugs in Algeria are cannabis, cocaine, crack, heroin, opium and psychotropic substances.

In conclusion, these harmful substances pose a serious threat to the integrity of the State. The health and well-being of the population, especially the youth - the pillars of the nation - are at stake. If the youth are endangered, the nation itself is endangered. This is precisely the aim of drug traffickers and global criminal organisations. It is therefore imperative for Algeria to take all the above-mentioned preventive and deterrent measures to eradicate this phenomenon, while at the same time engaging in international and regional cooperation aimed at safeguarding public health and maintaining the stability of the State.

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Ordinary and Organic Legislation:

1. Law No. 23-05 of Shawwal 17, 1444 (7 May 2023), amending and supplementing Law No. 04-18 of Dhul-Qi'dah 13, 1425 (25 December 2004), on the prevention of drugs and psychotropic substances and the suppression of their illicit use and trafficking.
2. **References:**
3. Discovery of 35.9 kg of cocaine aboard a foreign ship in the port of Algiers, Algerian News Agency, reported on Saturday, 29 July 2023, 22:41, Algeria.
4. International Narcotics Control Board, United Nations, International Narcotics Control Board Report 2022, p. 55. INCB. Vienna. International Centre. Room E-1339. PO Box 500. 1400 Vienna, Austria.
5. World Drug Report 2021, Volume 4, subtitle 'Global cocaine use' and Figure 13.
6. World Drug Report 2022, Volume 4, Drug market trends: Cocaine, opioid stimulants and new psychoactive substances (United Nations Publications, 2022), data for the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Colombia and Peru.
7. Majid Sarrah, "The drug problem in figures", Al-Shorouk, 30 April 2023, 1227, Algeria.
8. Mohamed Selhani, "The Most Notorious: The Rocket, The Taxi, and The Red One", Hallucinogens are a Serious Threat to Algeria, Al Jazeera Net Reporters, Al Jazeera, 17 May 2023.
9. "Algeria's fight against drug abuse advances on three fronts", Algerian Radio, 30 April 2023, 11:20.
10. Abdelhafid Sajal, "Drug Use in Algeria. A direct link between consumption and rising crime", Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, 28 May 2023, Algeria.
11. Abdelhafid Sajal, "Article 17 and the War on Drugs... Challenges Not Achieved by Strict Penalties," 14 June 2023, Algeria.