



NIGERIA  
NATIONAL  
DRUG THREAT  
ASSESSMENT  
2018



European Union



**UNODC**  
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### **Response to Drugs and Related Organized Crime in Nigeria**

This assessment was undertaken by Professor Etannibi Alemika, Professor of Criminology at the University of Jos and supported through funding from the European Union as part of the UNODC implemented project “*Response to Drugs and Related Organized Crime in Nigeria*”.

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# NIGERIA NATIONAL DRUG THREAT ASSESSMENT, 2018

## Introduction

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Involvement in illicit drug enterprises by Nigerians has been recorded over the past four decades, since the early 1980s. This has elicited concern and responses from Nigerian citizens and successive governments as well as several countries and international organizations.

Since 2013, the European Union has been supporting a broad-based programme entitled *Response to Drugs and Organized Crime in Nigeria*, with the objective of supporting “Nigeria’s efforts in fighting drug trafficking, preventing drug use and curbing organized crime.” The United Nations Office of Drug and Crime (UNODC) is the implementing agency. One of the primary objectives of the programme is to provide “A holistic overview of the current situation and predicted trends in relation to drug use, trafficking and production of drugs impacting on Nigeria and associated policy implications.” This involves conducting “Detailed qualitative studies and assessments of drug trafficking and use, including narcotics and psychotropic substances, drug related crime, organized crime groups and networks, and the associated threats at the national, regional and international level.”

## Sources of data

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Data for this assessment of drugs in Nigeria were obtained from several primary and secondary sources: interviews with officials in law enforcement and regulatory agencies; statistics and reports from agencies responsible for drug control and regulation; publications by international organizations, especially UNODC, and publications by scholars, researchers and practitioners. This assessment is based on an analysis of those data. Threat assessments focus on recent and current conditions; this is not a historical analysis of the efficacy of drug control responses, but, rather, is a look at current efforts and capacity to prevent or mitigate risks.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Current drug situation in Nigeria

Analyses of the data collected for this assessment indicate the following trends and patterns of illicit drugs in the country:

1. Persistent and significant involvement of some Nigerian citizens in illicit drug enterprises at national and international levels.
2. Available statistics from the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) from 2015 through 2017 do not indicate a systematic reduction or increase in trafficking of cocaine, heroin or cannabis during those years. Indeed, high seizure statistics may reflect increased trafficking or improved law enforcement. Likewise, a decrease in seizures may reflect a decline in trafficking or constraints on effective law enforcement.
3. Capacity to produce amphetamine-type stimulants, especially methamphetamine, now exists in Nigeria. Fifteen clandestine laboratories were discovered between 2009 and 2018. While Nigerians controlled the laboratories, experts from abroad were employed to produce the drug and train Nigerians in its production. Methamphetamine produced in Nigeria is trafficked abroad.
4. The range of drugs involved in the illicit drug trade has increased, as has drug use.
5. Cannabis is produced in an increasing number of Nigerian states.
6. Judicial decisions are often inconsistent and disproportionate, especially in respect to bail and sentencing.
7. Private or bond terminal operations are not always closely monitored, and can be used for trafficking illicit drugs and facilitating other organized crimes.
8. There is increased demand for, and use and misuse of, a variety of controlled drugs such as tramadol, codeine-laced syrups, psychotropic drugs and substances and mixture of various substances.
9. Countries in West Africa, where trafficking in drugs is a problem and capacity for its control is weak, surround Nigeria. Drugs are trafficked in and out of Nigeria through neighbouring countries.
10. Drug trafficking through Nigeria into other countries is occurring with the active participation of Nigerian domestic criminal networks operating on a global scale.
11. Porous borders that are inadequately policed facilitate trans-border trafficking in illicit drugs and other illicit goods.

### Threats associated with the current drug situation in Nigeria

Trafficking and abuse of illicit drugs have serious political, economic and social consequences. Literature and research on illicit drug supply and demand has shown that even sustained, appropriate and adequate efforts are often unable to curb illicit drugs, which pose threats to political stability and good governance, sustainable economic development, national security, community and personal safety, and social solidarity.

Given the current drug situation and constraints on the effective control of illicit drugs in Nigeria, enumerated in the previous section, there is no doubt that criminal drug markets and networks – as well as the growing abuse of drugs – constitute serious threats to good governance, security and development in Nigeria. Entrenched markets in illicit drugs in the country can have the following consequences:

- ▶ Distortion of economic management and efficiency through illicit flows of money, good and services.

- ▶ Undermining of democratic political governance and effective public decision-making due to corruption of public institutions and officials.
- ▶ Political and socioeconomic instability due to the weakening of government institutions, especially security, law enforcement and judicial agencies.
- ▶ Employing or encouraging violence to protect the supply of illicit drugs, with adverse consequences for security and development of individuals, communities, countries and the global community.

Demand for and abuse of illicit drugs and substances constitute serious threats to national and human development and security, especially in the following areas:

- ▶ Increases in the availability, consumption and users of illicit drugs.
- ▶ Health complications that diminish the wellbeing and productivity of individuals who abuse or misuse drugs, which hinders economic development.
- ▶ Diversion of resources for development into the provision of medical care for drug abusers, thereby reducing resources available for human development and welfare.
- ▶ Incidence and prevalence of violence associated with demand for illicit drugs. Three forms of crime are most commonly associated with demand for drugs: crimes associated with violation of laws regulating or controlling possession, distribution and use of drugs; involvement of drug abusers in crime to obtain money required to procure drugs; and crime committed under the influence of drugs.
- ▶ Constraints on the development and welfare of individuals involved in drugs due to drug-induced illness, dropping out of school, or poor academic or work performance.
- ▶ Abuse of drugs and substances affects family relationships and stability, and are triggers of domestic violence, child abuse, and economic and emotional stress for family members.
- ▶ Criminological literature shows that communities with high rates of drug use are often plagued by social disorganization.

Continuing involvement of Nigerians in criminal drug markets at national and international levels, and the growing abuse of drugs within the country pose serious threats to national and human development, and security.

### Constraints of illicit drug prevention and control

Successive governments in Nigeria have introduced laws aimed at preventing and controlling illicit drugs. Those measures led to the establishment of a number of new government agencies. Analyses of the data collected through interviews and group discussions with drug enforcement and regulatory officers, and statistical reports from drug enforcement and regulatory agencies for this assessment reveal the following constraints on responses to illicit drugs:

1. Inadequate political will and investment in adopting and implementing effective approaches and measures to tackle illicit drugs by successive Nigerian governments.
2. Enforcement and judicial institutions lack adequate resources and capacity, and are vulnerable to corruption by organized criminal entrepreneurs.
3. Analysis and understanding of the supply and demand for illicit drugs and other forms of organized crime are inadequate because of a dearth of relevant information. Until recently, inadequate attention was paid to developing and maintaining a comprehensive data and statistical management system.
4. Evidence and knowledge-based drug policies, management and operations have not received adequate attention. Intelligence-sharing by foreign drug enforcement agencies with their Nigerian counterparts accounts for many of the successful interdictions of drug trafficking in the country.

5. Intelligence-led drug law enforcement has not received adequate attention. This has a negative impact on the effectiveness of agencies and officials in investigating the structure of organized crime groups involved in criminal drug enterprises. The relationships between individuals in the illicit drug trade at various levels or stages in the supply-demand chain are not yet adequately understood.
6. Inadequate resources and capacity by drug law enforcement agencies to effectively tackle cannabis cultivation through aerial surveillance of plantations, intelligence, investigation, prosecution and operations to disrupt trade.
7. Inadequate capacity and facilities for drug prevention, treatment and rehabilitation.
8. Adequate attention has not been given (in terms of resources or procedures) to detecting and targeting organized crime groups. Inadequate investment of resources for long-term intelligence and investigation has limited law enforcement agencies' ability to target suspects, intervene during drug trafficking incidents and identify the interconnectedness of groups involved in the drug trade.
9. Available statistics from drug enforcement agencies, treatment centres and media reports indicate increasing trafficking and abuse of psychotropic substances, especially the non-medical use of opioid-based drugs like tramadol and codeine.
10. Drug control in Nigeria relies substantially on assistance from foreign governments and development partners, especially UNODC. Critical training in operations, intelligence gathering and deployment, and acquisition of equipment are often paid for with external assistance. While this may have an immediate positive impact, it is not sustainable in the long run.
11. Law enforcement has focused on combating drug trafficking, while neglecting other approaches like drug demand reduction. Thus, even as a drug abuse epidemic plagues several Nigerian states, there is no robust national discussion about multi-disciplinary approaches that include harm reduction, available, accessible and affordable drug counselling, and treatment and rehabilitation.
12. Corruption is widespread and deters effective implementation of measures against illicit drugs.

These constraints on effective control of illicit drugs render the threats enumerated above highly probable.

## Recommendations

1. The Nigerian government should demonstrate stronger political will through constant evaluation and review of laws, policies and drug control measures, and allocate the necessary resources to conduct regular performance assessments and effective oversight of drug control efforts.
2. The government should ensure coherence in laws and organizational mandates to enhance collaboration and coordination among agencies and stakeholders.
3. Existing laws should be reviewed with the purpose of enhancing greater expertise and professionalism in the implementation and coordination of the two fundamental pillars of drug policy: supply and demand reduction. In most countries, and consistent with best global practice, drug law enforcement is separated from drug demand reduction. The former is assigned to designated law enforcement agencies, while the latter is assigned to health and social service agencies, education departments, research institutes and civil society organizations. It is recommended that:
  - a. Existing laws, regulations and policies should be reviewed to achieve better rationalization and alignment of functions along competencies to attain efficiency in the management of resources and performance.







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## 1. BACKGROUND

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Concerns over illicit drugs in Nigeria can be traced back to the early 1980s when a number of Nigerian citizens were arrested at domestic and international airports, including in the UK and US. The Nigerian government, under pressure from other countries, responded by adopting the Miscellaneous Offences Decree No.20 1984, which prohibited the production, trafficking, possession and use of illicit drugs. Under that law, individuals convicted of drug crimes were subject to long prison sentences, and, when the law was later amended, to the death penalty. In 1989, the government enacted the wide-ranging National Drug Law Enforcement Agency Decree, which was based on the *United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988*.

Drug threat assessments are future-oriented assessments of risks, based on current situation reports. Information and data for such assessments are often derived from multiple sources, including law enforcement intelligence and operational reports, criminal processing of drug suspects from arrest to sentencing, expert interviews and opinions, and literature reviews.<sup>1</sup>

These sources of data are generally absent across Africa, including in Nigeria. This is the first national drug threat assessment to be undertaken in Nigeria.

### Objective of assessment

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The objective of this assessment is to provide a holistic overview of the current situation and predicted trends in relation to drug use, trafficking and production of drugs in Nigeria, and examine the associated policy implications.

### Method and data

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Data for this assessment were collected from primary and secondary sources, using a variety of methods and tools. These are described below.

#### *Questionnaire, expert group discussion and interviews*

A questionnaire was developed and administered to 50 state commanders and some senior officials of NDLEA, selected officials of NPS and NCS. The officials were divided into three groups. Each participant completed the questionnaire and participated in a four-hour discussion on: the existence and structure of groups involved in illicit drug enterprises; patterns and trend of activities; methods of operation; actors; and problems and challenges associated with prevention and control of illicit drugs. The exercises were conducted on three consecutive days in April 2018 in Abuja.

Over three months, from April to June 2018, interviews in Lagos and Abuja were conducted with relevant heads of departments and operations in NDLEA, National Agency for Food Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Nigeria Prisons Service (NPS) and Nigeria Customs Service (NCS).

#### *Secondary sources of data and information*

Data and information were obtained from secondary sources, including:

1. Computer research and a review relevant literature (on-going).

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1 Zoutendijk, A.J. (2010). "Organised crime threat assessments: a critical review". *Crime, Law and Social Change*, Vol. 54/1: pp. 63-86.

2. NDLEA Annual Reports for 2015 through 2017, from the Intelligence Data Centre.
3. Statistics from Lagos's Murtala Mohammed International Airport (MMIA) on arrests and seizures of drugs by NDLEA from 2015 to 2017.
4. Staff disciplinary data collected from NDLEA Internal Affairs from 2015 to 2017.
5. Prosecution data from the NDLEA's Directorate of Prosecution and Legal Services, Lagos.
6. Statistics on budgets, appropriations and staff indebtedness, from NDLEA headquarters in Abuja.
7. Statistics on types of drugs abused by clients in 2016 in NDLEA's Drug Demand Reduction Unit.
8. Statistics and reports on seizures, arrests, custody of suspects and convicts provided by many units and departments in NDLEA, NCS, NPS;
9. Statistics on inmates in custody for drug-related offences at Ikoyi and Kirikiri Prisons as well as the proportion of inmates in the country's prisons in custody for involvement in illicit drugs, collected at Ikoyi Prison, Lagos and NPS headquarters, Abuja.
10. Statistics on annual estimation, approval and clearance for ephedrine, pseudo-ephedrine and tramadol, collected by NAFDAC.
11. The Nigerian Epidemiological Network Drug Use's (NENDU) reports for 2016 and 2017.
12. The national survey on drug use in Nigeria conducted in 2017.

### Data Analysis

The data collected from the various sources were analysed using the following methods:

1. Information obtained through questionnaires were analysed using SPSS to generate frequencies, percentages, and tables.
2. Statistics from agencies were extracted, computed and organized to generate frequencies, percentages, tables and charts.
3. Analysis of group discussion notes.
4. Content analysis of notes taken during interviews and of reports.

### Legal and organizational frameworks for suppression and coordination of illicit drugs

Since the colonial era, successive governments enacted laws to regulate or prohibit certain drugs. Relevant laws that regulate the standard, distribution and prescription of drugs in Nigeria are:

1. National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, (1989)
2. National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) Decree No. 15, 1993
3. The Pharmacists Council of Nigeria (1992)
4. Poisons and Pharmacy Act (1990)
5. Food and Drugs Act (1990)
6. Amphetamines and other Drugs Act (1968)
7. Nigerian Medical and Dental Council Act (1990)

Effective enforcement of these laws remains a serious challenge.

The NDLEA was established with a mandate to "enforce laws against the cultivation, processing, sale, trafficking and use of hard drugs and to empower the agency to investigate persons suspected to have dealings in drugs and other related matter."<sup>2</sup> The agency is also charged with coordinating all drug laws and enforcement functions. Its performance over the years has been uneven – often determined by leadership and type and quantity of assistance from the

<sup>2</sup> NDLEA Act 1989.

government and foreign partners. Data and information collected from NDLEA publications and reports, and from staff, indicate that the agency has several constraints, including the following:

1. A 2014 institutional assessment of the NDLEA by UNODC identified five key challenges for the organization:
  - a. Its financial situation.
  - b. The need to evolve from a reactive to a proactive, intelligence-driven organization.
  - c. The need to develop strategic direction and tactical management.
  - d. The need to review the drug demand reduction functionality, capability and capacity.
  - e. And the need to review all directorate functionality.
2. Undercover officials responsible for monitoring the conduct of personnel are no longer deployed.
3. Inadequate funding and training for internal affairs staff.
4. Inadequate personnel training and welfare.
5. Large indebtedness to personnel in the form of unpaid allowances.
6. Despite the apparent involvement of drugs in insurgency and terrorism, the role of NDLEA is not adequately emphasised in the country's counter-terrorism strategy.
7. Major forms of misbehaviour among staff, including extortion and corruption.

## 2. ORGANIZED CRIME

Illicit drug enterprise is an important form of organized crime at the national and international levels. Therefore, an assessment of the threats posed by illicit drugs will benefit from better understanding of the nature, structure, strategies and intentions of organized criminal networks. Numerous studies have tracked the evolution of organized crime.

The media, scholars, law enforcement officials and politicians understand the term “organized crime” differently; the concept also has varying interpretations in different countries. That has led to an array of approaches to dealing with the multi-dimensional problems and challenges that organized crime poses.<sup>3</sup> Debate continues over the concept of organized crime in Africa, given the predominantly loose framework within which illicit enterprises operate in the continent. The conceptualization and categorization of organized crime in Africa is based on models developed and used in the US. This has led to the problematic belief among scholars, international organizations and foreign governments that criminal organizations exist in Africa and are responsible for economic crimes in many countries. However, the identities of such groups are rarely known or disclosed as they are in other parts of the world.

In Europe, and North and South America, security agencies know the identities and leaders of many mafia organizations and cartels, which enables targeted investigations by law enforcement. Such knowledge is lacking across Africa. Thus, literature references Nigerian and West African criminal organizations without identifying specific groups or their leaders. This leads to the question: If such organizations exist, why has it been so difficult to identify them, by enlisting the cooperation of people who have been arrested or convicted? This indicates that the phenomenon of organized crime in Africa is still poorly understood; substantial research and intelligence are required to address the gap in knowledge.

Regardless, the definition of organized criminal groups in the *UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crimes* is elastic, to accommodate conspiratorial illegal activities involving few people. Article 2 (a) of the Convention defines organized criminal groups as

“A structured group of three or more persons, existing for a period of time and acting in concert with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offences established in accordance with this Convention, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit.”

The definition includes two key terms, “structured group” and “serious crimes”, which were defined in sub-sections b and c of Article 2 of the Convention. Serious crime was defined as “Conduct constituting an offence punishable by a maximum deprivation of liberty of at least four years or a more serious penalty,” and structured group as “A group that is not randomly formed for the immediate commission of an offence and that does not need to have formally defined roles for its members, continuity of its membership or a developed structure.” Differences in criminalization of activities and penalties for offences may affect the measurement of organized crimes across jurisdictions. That definition contains the following key elements of organized criminal groups:

- ▶ Association of three or more persons in structured relationships
- ▶ Maintained for the commission of crimes
- ▶ Over a period
- ▶ And for the purpose of: “Committing one or more serious crimes, and for the primary purpose or goal of obtaining, *directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit.*”

3 Peter Gastrow (2013). *Transnational organised crime: The stepchild of crime-combating priorities*, ISS, Policy Brief 46. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies; Andre Standby (2003). “Rival Views of Organised Crime”. Institute for Security Studies; Lupsha, P. A. (1983). *Network versus Networking: Analysis of an Organized Crime Group*. Beverly Hills, Ca. Sage.

The definitions of organized crime and organized crime groups are constantly revised or redefined by scholars, policy makers, lawmakers and law enforcement agencies. The traditional understanding of organized crime was developed in Europe and the US, where mafia groups controlled criminal organizations and businesses. Those groups were organized hierarchically and members often belonged to one ethnicity. Thorstein Sellin observed that organized crime is often described as “Synonymous with economic enterprise organized for the purpose of conducting illegal activities and which, when in pursuit of legitimate ventures, uses illegal methods...Financial profit is their goal.”<sup>4</sup> This understanding of organized crime does not adequately explain the diversity and structure of organizations, groups and networks that engage in illicit enterprises across much of the world.

Recent definitions of organized crime have de-emphasized hierarchical organization, ethnic origin, longevity or relationships. It is now understood that organized crime groups, including cartels, the mafia and criminal networks, have many different structures. The primary motives for organized crimes or criminal organizations are to acquire wealth through the delivery of illegal goods and services, or the provision of legal goods and services through illegal channels. Corruption, violence, secrecy and loyalty are hallmarks of organized crime groups, intended to protect their criminal enterprises.

### Organized crime in West Africa

Geographically, West Africa consists of 15 countries that are members of the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS).<sup>5</sup> European and American scholarship, literature and interests have shaped the discussion of organized crime in West Africa. That has led to the alienation of West African scholars and thinkers, who may have different ideas of what constitutes organized crime and about which approaches should be taken to address it. One study, which attempted to empirically assess the understanding that residents of West African and Sahel countries have of organized crime, found:

“The majority of the participants interviewed in the course of the study did not understand organized crime to involve any activities with only economic implications. Organized crime, in the understanding of most of the community-based discussions, did not include trafficking or smuggling, regardless of the commodity, but was restricted to murder, violent crime, road banditry, burglary, and armed robbery in the street by small gangs, or possibly motor vehicle theft.”<sup>6</sup>

That study found that citizens considered corruption as the most potent crime with the most negative impact on their lives.<sup>7</sup>

West African countries were colonies of Britain, Portugal and France from the late nineteenth century until the 1960s. They were constituted as colonial states by amalgamation of many previously independent societies with varying economic and social structures. As a result, they are multi-ethnic and multi-religious countries, confronted by challenges of nation building and development.

4 Thorstein Sellin (May 1963). “Organized Crime: A Business Enterprise”. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 347: pp. 12-19.

5 Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, and Burkina Faso. Mauritania withdrew its membership in 2002., Cameroon which shares border with Nigeria, belongs to Central Africa.

6 Tuesday Reitano and Mark Shaw (2014). *People’s perspectives of organised crime in West Africa and the Sahel*, ISS Paper 254: p. 4.

7 Ibid.

West African countries have not succeeded in attaining sustainable economic development. Liberal democratic political culture and institutions are weak, and human development indicators are low. Advances in industrial development were reversed through structural adjustment programmes promoted by the IMF and World Bank and many advanced capitalist economies in the 1980s. Implementation of structural adjustment programmes led to the de-industrialization of countries across the region.

In the 1980s and 1990s, many African countries experienced political conflict and instability due largely to economic crises. Structural adjustment programmes resulted in a lack of access to social services (especially education and health), mass poverty and deterioration of public services and infrastructure. At the same time, West African countries became major transit routes for illicit drugs from South America to Europe and from Asia to North America. West African citizens, especially Nigerians, were increasingly arrested in airports in the US, UK and several European countries. Officials in the US and UK urged West African countries to adopt drug control legislation and impose stringent penalties for drug trafficking offences.

Literature and policy papers cite several types of organized criminal enterprises involving West Africans, including: corruption and money laundering; trafficking in persons, drugs and arms; advance fee fraud; cybercrimes and Internet fraud, including identity theft; smuggling; piracy and maritime robbery, especially in the Gulf of Guinea; armed robbery; smuggling of diamonds, petroleum products, gold and other precious stones, rubber, timber, and ivory; fraudulent trade practices, and dumping of toxic materials.<sup>8</sup>

Nigerian organized criminal networks operate in several West African countries. A Ghanaian anti-narcotic agency official provided insight into the involvement of Nigerians in criminal enterprises in that country.<sup>9</sup> He reported that Nigerians, sometimes in collaboration with Ghanaians, commit crimes including cybercrimes, drug and human trafficking, romance fraud targeted especially at Westerners, and money laundering for Ghanaians and Nigerians. According to his account, Nigerians launder money in bank deposits, real estate and commerce within Ghana. He observed that, while ethnicity of foreign nationals is difficult to determine, Igbo speaking people constitute the majority of Nigerians arrested for organized crimes in Ghana.

With respect to the prevalence and impact of organized crime in West Africa, the Ghanaian anti-narcotic officer believed that criminal syndicates have, to some extent, compromised Ghanaian government officials in key agencies and positions, and that some political parties may be receiving funding from clandestine organizations. He identified the following effects of drug trafficking in Ghana: distortion of the economy as illicit funds are laundered; corruption of state officials; a growing local market for drugs; and abuse of drugs. The anti-narcotic agency in Ghana faces similar constraints as its Nigerian counterpart. Constraints in the effective prevention and control of illicit drugs in Ghana include inadequate training in intelligence gathering and a lack of political will to develop and sustain the capacity of security agencies.

8 UNODC (2005). *Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa*; Antonio L. Mazzitelli. "Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: The Additional Challenge". *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944)*, Vol. 83/6, Africa and Security (Nov. 2007): pp. 1071-109. See also: Stephen Ellis (2009). "West Africa's International Drug Trade" *African Affairs*, Vol. 108/431: pp. 171-196; Gail Wannenburg (2005). "Organized Crime in West Africa," *African Security Review*, Vol. 14/4; "Comprehensive Assessment of Drug Trafficking and Organised Crime in West and Central Africa". 2014; *The Global Initiative against Organized Crime for the African Union*; Etannibi E. O Alemika (2013). *Organized and Transnational Crime in West Africa*. Heinrich-Boll-Stiftung and Regine Schonenberg (eds.); *Transnational Organized Crime: Analyses of a Global Challenge to Democracy*, Bielefeld: transcript Verlag: pp. 127-144; Etannibi E.O. Alemika (Ed.) (2013). *The impact of organized crime on governance in West Africa*. Abuja: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung; Tuesday Reitano and Mark Shaw (2014). *People's perspectives of organised crime in West Africa and the Sahel*. ISS Paper 254.

9 Interview conducted on 15 May 2018 at Abuja during a multi-country capacity building workshop for anti-narcotic officials in West Africa.



Involvement of Africans in transnational organized criminal networks and enterprises has been attributed to several factors, in particular: economic turmoil since the late 1970s; structural adjustment programmes and their aggravating effects on poverty, inequality, unemployment, and access to social and welfare services; globalization; conflicts and civil war; corruption; and illicit financial flows from Africa to developed countries.<sup>10</sup>

Several international, continental and regional instruments apply in West Africa. They include:

- a. The *United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988*
- b. The *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*
- c. The *United Nations Convention against Corruption*
- d. The *African Union Convention on Preventing and Combatting Corruption*
- e. The *Economic Community of West African States Protocol on the Fight against Corruption*
- f. The *Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons*
- g. The West African Bureau of the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol)
- h. The *Economic Community of West African States Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters*
- i. The *Economic Community of West African States Convention on Extradition*

In addition, organizations in Africa that seek to enhance control of organized crime are emerging, including: Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies in Africa; the Intergovernmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA); the West African Police Chiefs Committee (WAPCCO); the West African Bureau of the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol); and the African Police Organization (Afripol), which launched in May 2017 in Algeria.

Despite the instruments and organizations, their utilization for effective control of illicit drugs remains a challenge for countries across West Africa. As already stated, control of illicit drugs in the region is inhibited by:

Complicity of government officials and political office holders in some activities (especially corruption, money laundering and proliferation of arms); weakness of state anti-crime and judicial institutions; corruption by security agencies; lack or effective intelligence capability and intelligence sharing and coordination among security agencies within the region; and lack of reliable evidence on organized criminal activities.<sup>11</sup>

10 Mark Shaw (2003). *Crime As Business, Business As Crime: West African Criminal Networks in Southern Africa*. Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs; Mark Shaw and Tuesday Reitano (2013). "The evolution of organised crime in Africa". Paper 244, Pretoria: Institute of Security Studies; Axel Klein (1994). "Trapped in the Traffic: Growing Problems of Drug Consumption in Lagos". *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 32/4: pp. 657-77; UNODC (2005). *Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa*. New York: United Nations Organization; Alemika, E.E.O. (1989). *Narcotic drug control policy in Nigeria*. Development Policy Center; Ibadan; Etannibi, E.O Alemika (2013). *Organized and Transnational Crime in West Africa*. Heinrich-Boll-Stiftung and Regine Schonenberg (eds.); *Transnational Organized Crime: Analyses of a Global Challenge to Democracy*. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag; pp. 127-144; Etannibi E.O. Alemika (2013). *Organised Crime and Governance in West Africa*. EEO Alemika (Ed.); (2013). *The impact of organized crime on governance in West Africa*. Abuja: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, pp. 16-34; Stephen Ellis (2009). "West Africa's International Drug Trade" *African Affairs*, Vol. 108/431: pp. 171-196; Ashley Neese Bybee (2012). "The Twenty-First Century Expansion of the Transnational Drug Trade in Africa". *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 66/1: pp. 69-84; Stephen Ellis and Mark Shaw (2015). "Does Organized Crime Exist in Africa?". *African Affairs*, Vol. 114/457: pp. 505-528; Emmanuel Akyeampong (2005) "Diaspora and Drug Trafficking in West Africa: A Case Study of Ghana". *African Affairs*: Vol. 104/416; Gail Wannenburg (2005). "Organized Crime in West Africa". *African Security Review*, Vol. 14/4.

11 Alemika, EEO (2013). *Organised Crime and Governance in West Africa*, in EEO Alemika (Ed.); (2013). *The impact of organized crime on governance in West Africa*. Abuja: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, pp. 16-34.

## Drug trafficking in and through West Africa

Information and statistics on extent and impact of organized crimes, especially illicit drug in West Africa, are very unreliable. Criminologists attribute this to the problem of dark and grey figures, weaknesses of record keeping and effective deployment of intelligence in law enforcement in the region. Data on the flow of heroin and cocaine through Africa, produced by several international agencies, are estimates or extrapolations based on seizures, which themselves are unreliable indicators. Seizures may either indicate increased trafficking or improved law enforcement, and may not necessarily be a true reflection of the scale of drug trafficking.

West Africa is a trafficking route for cocaine from producing countries in South America (Colombia, Peru and Bolivia) to consuming nations in Europe (especially the UK, Spain, Italy, Germany and France). West Africa is also a route for heroin produced in Southeast Asia, especially Afghanistan, to consumers in North America and Europe.

Assessments of threats of illicit drugs in West Africa in 2008 and 2013 provided insights into patterns and trends of illicit drug supply and demand in the region.<sup>12</sup> The 2008 publication focused on drug trafficking as a security threat in West Africa, while in 2013 the report focused on the wider threat of transnational organized crime in West Africa.

*Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat in West Africa* (2008) reported a high volume of cocaine trafficking through West Africa to Europe. Guinea-Bissau and Ghana were identified as landing sites through which cocaine was “trafficked between West African countries before being shipped out on commercial air flights.” The report estimated that 3.4 tons of cocaine were “seized from some 1,357 couriers on commercial air flights from West Africa to Europe” between 2004 and 2008. The report continued: “62 per cent of the incidents and 55 per cent of the cocaine interdicted” through air couriering “came from just four of the 15 ECOWAS countries: Senegal, Nigeria, Guinea (Conakry), and Mali.” According to the report, “Senegal and Nigeria were the source of the greatest volumes of cocaine seized on commercial air flights.” Those two countries had “the largest international air traffic volumes” in the region. In contrast, “Guinea (Conakry) and Mali are disproportionately represented in terms of the number of air couriers detected relative to their air traffic volumes.” The 2008 report stated: “Guinea (Conakry) was embarkation point of 221 couriers detected” between 2006 and 2008 and constituted the “single largest national total in the region.”

Illustrating the involvement of Nigerians in the global drug trade, the report stated: “Nigerian citizens were by far the most detected nationality among arrestees, although their share of the air couriers (57 per cent) was close to their share of the regional population (53 per cent).” And, the report continues: “80 per cent of the cocaine seized destined for Spain was taken from nationals of Nigeria, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, and Cape Verde. Two-thirds of the Nigerians embarked from Guinea or Mali. The market in the United Kingdom is even more concentrated among a few groups, with 75 per cent of the couriers detected being Nigerian or British nationals. Over 60 per cent of the Nigerians detected embarked from Nigeria.” According to the report, “Nigerian nationals were the foremost foreign group arrested for cocaine trafficking in France in 2006, comprising 31 per cent of the foreign cocaine traffickers arrested that year.” The report observed that heroin trafficked through West Africa was “largely handled by Nigerian couriers operating from Pakistan.”

12 UNODC (2018). *Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat in West Africa*; UNODC (2013). *Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment*.

Cocaine seizure in West Africa rose very significantly from 2003 through 2007:

- ▶ 2003: 266 kg
- ▶ 2004: 1,788 kg
- ▶ 2005: 1,323 kg
- ▶ 2006: 3,161 kg
- ▶ 2007: 6,458 kg

Large seizures of cocaine were reported in several West African countries from 2006-2008. Two seizures from small airplanes occurred in 2007, when 630 kg were seized in Mauritania, and in 2008 when 700 kg were seized in Sierra Leone's Lungi International Airport. Likewise, 1,900 kg of cocaine were seized at Parapan, a small coastal village in Ghana in May 2006. 62 per cent of the incidents and 55 per cent of the volume of cocaine seized in European airports from January 2006 to May 2008 were reportedly on board flights that originated from Senegal, Nigeria, Guinea (Conakry) and Mali. It appears that trend has declined for most of the years since 2008.<sup>13</sup>

One of the threats of drug trafficking is the risk of corruption among public officials and policy-making bodies. Some cases of senior civilian and military government officials colluding with drug traffickers have been reported in a number of West African countries. There are anecdotal reports indicating that politicians and armed non-state groups in some countries may be offering protection to transnational drug syndicates. Seizures of large quantities of cocaine were recorded in the majority of West Africa countries between 2005 and 2011.<sup>14, 15</sup>

A 2013 UNODC report focused on the wider concerns of transnational organized crimes, of which drug trafficking is a component.<sup>16</sup> Highlights of its findings include:

- a. A decline in cocaine trafficking through West Africa between 2008 and 2011, compared its peak in 2007.
- b. Increased heroin trafficking through West Africa to Europe.
- c. A new trafficking route from South America to West Africa: instead of direct shipment from producing countries, illicit drug entrepreneurs trafficked drugs to Brazil and, from there, distributed drugs to various destinations.
- d. A diversification of the means of transportation of illicit drugs with increasing use of maritime shipping.
- e. Changes in departure points by traffickers to avoid suspicion. Increasing prevalence of Benin as a transit hub.
- f. An emergence of methamphetamine production in West Africa and its export to East Asia and South Africa. Traffickers of the drug were identified as citizens of Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria and Senegal. The drug was predominantly destined for Asian countries including Malaysia, Korea and Thailand.

Ephedrine is produced in East and South Asia, exported to West Africa where it used to produce methamphetamine, which is then shipped back to countries in Asia. Methamphetamines from West Africa have been seized in Japan, Thailand, Korea and Malaysia.

There has been an overwhelming representation of Nigerians among the West Africans involved in criminal drug markets across the globe. Among Nigerians, South Easterners are most represented in the drug trade. One report stated: "Nigerians, particularly those from the South East of the country, have traditionally shuttled cocaine and heroin from diaspora communities near production areas (such as Karachi, Sao Paulo, and Bangkok) to diaspora communities in

13 UNODC (2008). *Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat in West Africa*; UNODC (2013). *Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment*.

14 UNODC (2008). *Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat in West Africa*.

15 West Africa Commission on Drugs (WACD) (2014). *Not Just in Traffic: Drugs, the State and Society in West Africa*: p. 18.

16 UNODC (2013). *Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment*.

consumer countries”.<sup>17</sup> Local enforcement statistics revealed a corresponding pattern. Among 347 persons arrested for trafficking at the Murtala Mohammed International Airport in Lagos from January 2015 to April 2018, 68.9 per cent were from four Nigerian states: Anambra (31.7 per cent); Abia (19.0 per cent); Enugu (10.4 per cent); and Imo (7.8 per cent). This pattern shows there are opportunities for more targeted policies to address residents’ motivation for getting involved in the illicit drug trade.<sup>18</sup>

While recognizing the dangers of profiling and prejudices, the Nigerian government and communities need to adopt an approach similar to the one used to tackle trafficking in persons, especially for sexual exploitation. Reports indicated overrepresentation of girls from Edo State among the victims and perpetrators of trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation in Europe. In response, the federal and Edo State governments, civil society organizations and international agencies are cooperating to better understand precipitating factors, offering diverse services and implementing measures to curb the practice. This model needs to be adopted and adapted in dealing with involvement in the illicit drug trade. Such measures should not be anchored on penal sanctions alone but also must expand socio-economic opportunities, promote value re-orientation and improve governance, especially in states where recruitment into organized criminal market is high and entrenched.

### Threats of transnational organized crime in West Africa

Local demand for cocaine, heroin and psychotropic substances has been growing, resulting in the West Africa Commission on Drugs’ (WACD) publication of a report, entitled *Not Just in Transit*, about the state of drugs in the region.<sup>19</sup> The report stated: “growth of trafficking has been accompanied by increasing local consumption of illicit drugs.”<sup>20</sup> It was observed that:

Drug trafficking networks have established footholds in West Africa countries by exploiting already weak governance systems and loopholes in legislation. They also benefit from extensive networks of enablers and fixers in the formal and informal sectors which provide them easy access to airports, ports, storage and transportation facilities, communication systems and official documentation...The drug trade has also led to an increase in money laundering.<sup>21</sup>

A 2017 report from the 27th meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa observed: “an alarming increase in cannabis plant cultivation and cannabis production, in terms of acreage and packaging processes,” and warned of the persistence of cocaine trafficking in West Africa.<sup>22</sup> Drug trafficking in West Africa has engendered political, economic, social and health problems. Manifestations of those problems include: aggravation of fragility and criminalization of the state; infiltration of government agencies and decision-making by organized crime entrepreneurs; increasing drug abuse and contingent health problems; and intensification of violent crimes.

17 UNODC (2013). *Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment*: pp. 19, 27.

18 Arrest Statistics obtained from the MMIA Command in Lagos in May 2018.

19 West Africa Commission on Drugs (WACD) (2014). *Not Just in Traffic: Drugs, the State and Society in West Africa*.

20 Ibid.

21 West Africa Commission on Drugs (WACD) (2014). *Not Just in Traffic: Drugs, the State and Society in West Africa*: p. 8.

22 UNODC (2017). “Current situation with respect to regional and subregional cooperation in countering drug trafficking”. Report of the Twenty-seventh Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa, held at Hurgada, Egypt, 18-22 September 2017.

## Organized crime and illicit drugs in Nigeria

Nigeria is the most populous African nation, with an estimated 180 million inhabitants in 2018. The country gained independence from Britain on October 1, 1960. It is a federation of thirty-six states and the Federal Capital Territory, comprising nearly 400 ethnic groups.<sup>23</sup> Nigeria shares borders with four countries and has a coastline along the Bight of Benin and the Gulf of Guinea.<sup>24</sup>

Since the early 1980s, Nigeria has, more than any country in West Africa, been under unrelenting pressure from foreign governments to curb drug trafficking by its citizens. In response, in 1984 the military government enacted a draconian law that prescribed the death penalty for the production, distribution and possession of illicit drugs.<sup>25</sup> Enforcement of that law prioritized cocaine and heroin, which were of concern to powerful foreign governments, notably in the US and UK. Publication of data on the involvement of Nigerians in drug trafficking and sensational stories in Western media outlets led to the criminalization and discriminatory mistreatment of Nigerians in several European countries and in the US. Carrier and Klantschnig noted that sensationalized reporting about drugs in Africa led to the adoption of approaches to fight drugs across the continent. Those approaches often resulted in repression, corruption and failure to solve the “real problems surrounding the production, trade and use of drugs” in Africa.<sup>26</sup>

The most prevalent forms of organized crime in Nigeria are corruption, money laundering, trafficking in persons, drugs and arms, smuggling, and illicit financial flows through commercial transactions, especially by foreign companies and their local affiliates. Prior to 1980, production and use of cannabis was the major drug problem in Nigeria. Abuse of psychotropic drugs was also reported. Use of both types of substances was most prevalent among young people and long-distance commercial vehicle drivers.<sup>27</sup> Trafficking of cannabis within West Africa was also reported before the 1980s. Weak regulations meant users could easily obtain psychotropic drugs and substances from hawkers and patent medicine stores. Arrests of Nigerians in the UK and US in the early 1980s for trafficking cocaine and heroin attracted the attention of the government.

Beginning in 1982, the Nigerian Customs Service began arresting traffickers at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport in Lagos. By the second half of the 1980s, mass media reports about drug trafficking by Nigerians in several countries led many foreign governments to mount pressure on Nigeria to impose stringent laws and penalties for drug trafficking offences. In response, for the first time since independence, Nigerian lawmakers adopted new laws on drug control, regulation and prohibition. Decree 20 Of 1984 and the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, founded in 1989, were integral parts of the country’s response to its drug problem. Since then, drug control measures and resources have emphasized a law enforcement approach.<sup>28</sup> Inadequate attention has been given to the supply and demand of cannabis and psychotropic drugs, the most widely abused drugs in the country.

23 Otite, O (1991). *Ethnic pluralism in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Shaneson Press.

24 Republic of Benin, Chad, Cameroon and Niger.

25 Miscellaneous Offences (Decree 20) 1984. Under the Decree, retroactively applied, two Nigerians were sentenced to death and executed in 1984.

26 Carrier, N. and G. Klantschnig (2012). *Africa and the War on Drugs*. London: Zed Books: p. 2.

27 T. Asuni (1964 ).“Socio-Psychiatric Problems of Cannabis in Nigeria”. *Bulletin of Narcotics*, Vol. 16/2; T. A. Lambo (1965). “Medical and Social Problems of Drug Addiction in West Africa”. *Bulletin of Narcotics*, Vol. 17/1.

28 Isidore S. Obot (2004). “Responding to Substance Use Problems in Nigeria: The Role of Civil Society Organizations”. *Substance Use & Misuse*, Vol. 39/8: pp. 1287-1299; Isidore S Obot (2004). “Assessing Nigeria’s drug control policy, 1994–2000”. *The Internal Journal of Drug Policy*, Vol. 15/1: pp. 17–26; Gernot Klantschnig (2016). “The politics of drug control in Nigeria: Exclusion, repression and obstacles to policy change”. *The Internal Journal of Drug Policy*, Vol. 30: pp. 132–139; Etannibi E.O. Alemika (1998). *Narcotic Drugs Control Policy in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Development Policy Centre.

The drug trade manifests in multiple ways in Nigeria, including: cultivation, processing, sale and abuse of marijuana; trafficking, sale and abuse of cocaine and heroin; trafficking, production and abuse of psychotropic drugs and substances (especially tramadol and codeine); increasing local production and trafficking in amphetamine-type stimulants; and increasing use of different chemical solutions, solvents, inhalants. Drug trafficking and abuse within the country are facilitated by the lack of access to an adequate and efficient healthcare system. This leads to self-medication, aided by an open drug market, in which hawkers and patent medicine dealers are not effectively regulated. These sources constitute channels for prescribing, dispensing and procuring of drugs by a significant proportion of poor people, especially residents of rural areas and low-income areas in urban centres.

Recent statistics and reports of seizures within the country and secondary sources indicate that drug trafficking within Nigeria and involving Nigerians across the globe pose serious concerns. The report of the 27th meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa in 2017 observed the disproportionate arrest of Nigerians among traffickers of cocaine and heroin in European airports.<sup>29</sup> Citing statistics from the IDEAS database, it was reported at the meeting that:

...Between January 2016 and March 2017, 16 cocaine-related arrests were made at European airports in connection with flights originating in West and Central Africa, and almost 20 kg of cocaine were seized. All of the couriers who were arrested were Nigerian nationals and had departed from Nigeria (13 of them from Abuja airport). Between January and May 2016, the Joint Airport Interdiction Task Force of Murtala Muhammed International Airport seized nearly 28.33 kg of cocaine. Of the 15 seizures made, 11 were made on the Dubai-Lagos route, and all the couriers arrested in relation to the seizures were Nigerian nationals.”

The report continued: “Seizures made in 2016 by teams from the Container Control Programme in West Africa included 140 kg of cocaine and more than 33 tons of counterfeit medicines, including 10.32 tons of tramadol originating in India that were seized at the port of Lomé in June. In 2016, 8,157,732 tramadol pills were seized in the Niger, a country in the Sahel region that is particularly affected by tramadol misuse. In March 2017, another 187,200 tramadol pills were seized in the Niger.”<sup>30</sup> The report further noted: “In March 2016, the Joint Airport Interdiction Task Force in Lagos seized 4.7 kg of methamphetamine en route to South Africa and, in April 2016, the Task Force seized nearly 25 kg of methamphetamine en route to Kuala Lumpur. The couriers arrested in relation to both seizures were Nigerian nationals.”<sup>31</sup>

29 UNODC (2017). “Current situation with respect to regional and subregional cooperation in countering drug trafficking”. Report of the Twenty-seventh Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa, held at Hurghada, Egypt, 18-22 September 2017.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

### 3. DRUG USE IN NIGERIA

This section is based on drug use surveys, NDLEA statistics and reports, interviews with drug law enforcement officials, and other secondary sources.

Media reports of increasing drug abuse in Nigeria have attracted attention of both the government and public. The senate held a stakeholders' meeting in Kano in December 2017 to raise public awareness of increasing rates of drug abuse.

The World Drug Report (2018: 21) acknowledged that data on drug use in Africa are very limited. Nonetheless, it reported that:

Based on expert perceptions reported to UNODC, heroin use in Africa appears to have increased more than in other regions over the period 2006–2016...Increases in the use of heroin in East Africa were reported in 2015 by Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania and in 2016 by Madagascar; in southern Africa by Mozambique in 2015; and in West and Central Africa by Côte d'Ivoire in 2016. In 2016, several large African countries reported stabilization in heroin use – notably all of the North African countries, Nigeria in West and Central Africa, South Africa and Zambia in Southern Africa, and Kenya in East Africa. In the rest of Africa, expert perceptions point to a decline in heroin use in the region following several years of ongoing increases.<sup>32</sup>

Until recently, data on drug abuse and treatment in Nigeria were considered scanty and unreliable. Through the EU-funded and UNODC-implemented project *Response to Drugs and Related Organized Crime in Nigeria*, data reliability has improved, aided by a national drug use survey and the establishment of an epidemiological network.

Statistics from NDLEA counselling centres pertaining to 2,709 clients indicate that they used 29 different drugs or combinations of drugs and substances. More than two-thirds (67.0 per cent) of the clients used cannabis; 12.5 per cent used tramadol. Many clients used a combination of drugs and substances, including mixture of drugs like tramadol and codeine with alcohol or locally brewed drinks and substances. This indicates an emerging drug use epidemic in Nigeria.

In 2015, the National Epidemiological Network on Drug Use (NENDU) initiated a survey of demand for drug treatment services in the country. The network developed a data collection template intended to gather a wide range of information on drug use. The 2015 report covered 11 treatment centres, a majority of which were tertiary and public mental healthcare institutions with a combined 334 beds. The sample included six federal psychiatry hospitals, three university teaching hospitals, a private healthcare centre and a federal general hospital.

The 2015 report covered 1,044 patients admitted into the 11 centres, 92 per cent of which were male. Patients were predominantly young. The mean age was 30, more than a quarter (29.4 per cent) were younger than 24, more than two-fifths (44.9 per cent) were between 25 and 34, and 8.5 per cent were 45 and older. The mean age at first use was similar for both men and women, at 21 and 20.5, respectively. Seventy-four per cent lived with parents; 78.2 per cent were single. A half had tertiary education, while 11 per cent never completed primary school. Levels of educational attainment were similar for men and women. About a quarter (26 per cent) were employed, 15.4 per cent were students and 51 per cent were unemployed.

The report found that the most frequently used drugs were cannabis (36.2 per cent) and opiates (28.3 per cent). Most of the patients were referred or brought to facilities for treatment by family members and friends (87.3 per cent) who were often responsible for treatment payment (90 per cent). Among those admitted for opiate abuse, the most frequently used drugs were

32 World Drug Report 2018, Pamphlet 3: p. 21.

tramadol (71 per cent), codeine (15.1 per cent), pentazocine (9.9 per cent), and heroin and morphine (3.3 per cent). Males were more likely to use cannabis and alcohol. Females were often admitted for treatment due to the use of opiates, crack cocaine and sedatives. The NENDU report stated that older patients reported the use of alcohol and tobacco and younger patients reported the use of “relatively more illicit drugs.”

Only 5 per cent of a patients reported injecting a drug, but injection is more prevalent among males and younger patients. For this category of patients, the most frequently injected drugs were opiates (70 per cent), benzodiazepines (15 per cent) and cocaine (6 per cent). Relapse and return to treatment were widely reported, involving “a bit less than half of the primary drug patients (46.8 per cent)” and “primary users of opiates and cocaine tend to re-enter treatment more often.”

The 2016 NENDU report was based on data from the same 11 treatment centres covered in 2015. In addition, NDLEA provided two months’ worth of data from several of its counselling centres. The report covered 989 cases of admission for inpatient and outpatient treatment, comprising 940 (95 per cent) males and 49 (5 per cent) females. 17.79 per cent had education at the primary level or less, 35.7 per cent secondary and 46.5 per cent tertiary. A quarter (25.0 per cent) of the patients were employed, 3.7 per cent were occasionally employed, nearly a quarter (23.8 per cent) were students and 43.3 per cent were unemployed.

The report stated that cannabis and opiates were the two most frequently used drugs; a majority of patients sought treatment for these substances. Across treatment facilities, the most problematic or primary drug of use varied: Kaduna (opiates, 90 per cent); Abuja (cannabis, 66 per cent); private centre at Jos (cannabis, 36 per cent); teaching hospital in Jos (opiates, 32 per cent); Lagos (cannabis, 80 per cent); Abeokuta (cannabis, 73 per cent); Port Harcourt (cannabis, 72 per cent); Kano (opiates, 47 per cent), and NDLEA centres (cannabis, 56 per cent).

The mean age for all patients was 29.6. The mean age for patients admitted for various primary drugs varied as follows: alcohol (36.7); cannabis (29.0); cocaine (31.4); crack cocaine (33.3); other stimulants (29.0); opiates (28.1); sedative/hypnotics (25.6); and tobacco (50.5). More than a third (35.9 per cent) of patients declared opiates as their primary drug. Opiate drugs reported as most common by the 355 patients were: heroin (2.4 per cent); methadone (0.3 per cent); tramadol (68.9 per cent); pentazocine (6.9 per cent); codeine (21.0 per cent); and morphine (0.6 per cent). Tramadol and codeine accounted for 89.9 per cent reported drug use.

Nigeria’s drug demand problem and related health disorders are compounded by the use of multiple drugs. Data from the NENDU survey indicated the following pattern of poly-drug use: single drug or substance use (23.1 per cent); two drugs or substances (29.6 per cent); three drugs or substances (26.3 per cent); four or more drugs or substances (21.0 per cent). Five per cent of patients reported drug injection. Among males, 5 per cent reported having injected drugs, compared to 22.4 per cent of females.

According to the 2016 NENDU survey of facilities, drug injection was relatively low. However, among those who injected drugs, females were more than four times more likely to inject than males.

The 2016 NENDU report indicated a significant level of relapse among patients. Nearly a half (46 per cent) of patients had previously received treatment. It also found that dependence on drugs, measured by daily use, was very high. Daily use of drugs by patients was as follows: alcohol (72.3 per cent); cannabis (66.3 per cent); cocaine (54.2 per cent); crack cocaine (47.1 per cent); other stimulants/ATS (33.3 per cent); opiates (87.6 per cent); sedative/hypnotics (57.0 per cent); and tobacco (100.0 per cent). If the daily use figures can



serve as an indicator of dependence, patients were most addicted to tobacco, opiates, alcohol, cannabis, sedatives and cocaine.

The large-scale, nation-wide National Drug Use Survey, 2018 examined the extent and patterns of drug use. This robust study involved 38,850 household respondents, 9,344 regular drug users and 2,788 key informants from each state of Nigeria. Its major findings were:<sup>33</sup>

- ▶ The past-year prevalence of the use of any drug in Nigeria was estimated at 14.4 per cent (range 14.0 to 14.8 per cent), translating to 14.3 million people age 15 to 64 using a psychoactive substance in the previous year for non-medical purposes.
- ▶ More men (21.8 per cent, or 10.8 million) than women (7 per cent or 3.4 million) reported past-year drug use in Nigeria.
- ▶ The highest level of any past-year drug use was among those 25 to 39 years old.
- ▶ Almost 400,000, or nearly 3 per cent of all drug users were considered to be suffering from drug use disorders.
- ▶ For 10.8 per cent of the population, or 10.6 million people, cannabis was the most common drug used in the past year. Also, more than half (55 per cent) of high-risk drug users reported cannabis as the first drug they had used. The average age of first-time cannabis use among the general population was 19.
- ▶ Cannabis use was reported mostly among men (approximately 19 per cent of men compared to 2.6 per cent of women); the non-medical use of pharmaceutical opioids among men was nearly twice high as among women.
- ▶ An estimated 4.7 per cent of the population, or 4.6 million people, had used opioids in the past year.
- ▶ Nearly 80,000 people (or 0.08 per cent of the adult population) inject drugs. Of those, the majority (78 per cent) were men.
- ▶ The most common drugs injected in the previous year were pharmaceutical opioids, followed by cocaine and heroin.
- ▶ Poly-drug use was very common. Among high-risk drug users, nearly all (95 per cent) reported using more than one drug either simultaneously or concurrently in the past year, compared to nearly half of the drug users in the general population who reported poly-drug use.
- ▶ An estimated 87,000 (0.09 per cent of the population) had used heroin in the previous year. The mean age of first-time heroin use was 22. Whereas almost half of regular heroin users reported smoking it, and women were more likely than men to report injecting heroin.
- ▶ Geographically, the highest past-year prevalence of drug use was in the southern geopolitical zones: South East, South West, and South South (with past year prevalence ranging between 13.8 per cent and 22.4 per cent), compared to the northern geopolitical zones, where past year prevalence ranged between 10 per cent and 13.6 per cent.
- ▶ Self-reported health status was poorest among users of methamphetamine, heroin and tranquilizers. Past-year users of these drugs were more likely to report chronic health conditions than users of other substances.
- ▶ Two-thirds of high-risk drug users indicated a need for treatment of drug use disorders. Most high-risk drug users said it was difficult to access drug treatment.
- ▶ Older people, those worked casual jobs or who were unemployed were more likely to report difficulty in accessing treatment. The cost of treatment was cited as the primary barrier to access.

33 Draft Executive Summary of Nigerian Drug Use Survey (2017).

- ▶ The majority of regular drug users in treatment in the previous year were under age 35.
- ▶ Two-thirds of people who used drugs reported having serious problems such as missing school or work, doing a poorly at school or work, or neglecting their family or children.

The result of the survey substantially corroborated the findings in the 2015 and 2016 NENDU reports. All three indicated evolving problems of drug abuse and its consequences.

In group discussions, drug law enforcement officers provided information on drug use in states. The insight from the officers (based on their field experience) is useful and highlights include:

- a. Widespread drug abuse among students of secondary and tertiary educational institutions in Katsina State. Tramadol, codeine (cough syrup) and pemoline are frequently misused drugs. Psychotropic drugs are openly hawked, especially by a group known as *karofi*.
- b. Trafficking of psychotropic drugs and substances from South West and South East zones of Nigeria to Kaduna and other states in the North West zone, especially Kano, has fuelled drug abuse in Kaduna and neighbouring states, notably Kano.
- c. Abuse by young people of several local intoxicating substances, especially guskolo, was reported in Plateau State. Psychotropic substances are accessed through pharmacies and patent medicine stores. Twenty-one tons of psychotropic substances were seized in the state in 2017, while 43 kg of psychotropic substances were seized by NDLEA in a salons and boutiques within the first quarter of 2018.

## 4. DRUG TRAFFICKING IN NIGERIA

Nigerian criminal drug entrepreneurs play a critical role in global drug trafficking. Four categories of drugs are widely trafficked through Nigeria: cannabis, cocaine, heroin and psychotropic drugs (including methamphetamine, tramadol, codeine and diazepam). Considerable effort to conceal activities and actors render statistics on illicit drugs unreliable. This problem is compounded in Nigeria by poor information management systems, and inadequate emphasis on intelligence-led planning and operations by Nigerian security agencies. Examining data in this assessment cannot give a full or accurate depiction of the drug situation, but is indicative of the extent, pattern and trend of illicit drug supply and demand in the country.

### Figure 1: Case Study of Dynamics of Drug Trafficking in Nigeria

#### Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA), Lagos

From January 2015 to April 2018, 363 persons were arrested at MMIA in connection with illicit drugs. 234 (64.5 per cent) were male, 41 (11.3 per cent) were female, and the gender of 88 (24.2 per cent) was not indicated. More than a half (52.5 per cent) were 35 years old or younger; 7 out of 10 (73.3 per cent) were 40 years old or younger. Significantly, more than a fifth (20.4 per cent) were 20 years old or younger, while 20.8 per cent were 36-40 years old. Slightly more than a quarter (26.7 per cent), were older than 40.

Those arrested came from 17 of Nigeria's 36 states and from the Federal Capital Territory. The state of origin or nationalities of 16 persons arrested were not indicated. More than two-thirds (65.8 per cent) of those arrested were from four states: Anambra (30.3 per cent), Abia (18.2 per cent), Enugu (9.9 per cent) and Imo (7.4 per cent). 363 foreigners were arrested, including 13 South Africans, six Kenyans, six Lebanese, three Egyptians, 10 Brazilians and three Ghanaians.

Involved drugs were indicated for 320 of the arrests, and the most common drugs were: heroin (108), cocaine (115), cannabis (40), methamphetamine (28) and tramadol (11).

The modes of concealment by 291 of the 363 persons arrested were ingestion (59.8 per cent) and packing (36.8 per cent). The airlines patronized by those arrested were Qatar, Kenya, Ethiopia, Emirate, Turkish and Arik. Nearly three-fifths (214) of those arrested were departing and 40.7 per cent (147) were arriving.

Table 1 provides data on seizures of cannabis, cocaine and heroin from 2011 to 2017. Until 2015, different drugs, including amphetamine-type stimulants, tramadol, ephedrine and codeine were categorized as "others". Cannabis remains the most available illicit drug in Nigeria. Seizures were high during the period. In 2015, seizures quadrupled, though there is no explanation for this increase. There is no consistent trend for the seizure of cocaine. For example, cocaine seizures in 2017 were less than half of the average seizure rate of that drug during the 2011-2017 period. A similar trend was observed in the seizure of heroin. Nonetheless, from 2015 to 2017 seizures rose. The seizure of those drugs classified as "others" also increased 2015 to 2017. Although this data does not provide any clear trend on increases or decreases, it does show that seizures remain significant.

**Table 1: Seizure of cannabis, cocaine, heroin and psychotropics: 2011-2017**

Quantity of drugs seized: 2011-2017				
Year	Cannabis	Cocaine	Heroin	Others
2011	191,847.91	410.81	37.95	2,985.45
2012	228,794.13	131.89	211.03	3,905.45
2013	205,373.0	290.20	24.53	134,280.38
2014	53,878,194.52	226.04	56.45	7,562.49
2015	871,480.32	260.47	30.09	31,442.86
2016	183,394.0	305.17	66.28	79,826.04
2017	191,048.19	92.26	85.36	117,143.20

Sources: NDLEA Annual Report, 2017, pages 99-100 (unpublished copy)

## Cocaine

The source of cocaine is South America. Until the 2000s, the US was the primary destination for cocaine produced in South America. However, with increasingly effective law enforcement curtailing trafficking into North America, dealers in source countries began to explore markets in Europe. This led to increasing trafficking through West Africa to consumers in Europe, where demand remains high and is increasing. A majority of NDLEA narcotic commanders who participated in group discussions organized for this study believed that cocaine trafficking through Nigeria was on the decline. They attributed this to increasing law enforcement capacity due to stronger inter-agency collaboration, increasing logistics and vigilance at airports, collaboration with law enforcement agencies in several countries, including in West Africa, and the availability of and trafficking in alternative drugs.

Statistics on cocaine seizure in Nigeria over the past five years did not reveal any consistent trend indicating a decline or increase in trafficking (table 1). In 2013, 290.20 kg were seized; 2014, 226.04 kg; 2015, 260.47 kg; 2016, 305.17 kg; and 2017, 92.26 kg. While seizures in 2017 were lower than previous years, there is no evidence of a consistent decline over the five-year period. Information obtained during group discussions with state commanders indicated the existence of distribution networks in different parts of the country. Some networks had links with drug entrepreneurs in other countries. Cocaine distribution was reported in places including Isi-Alangwa, Abia.

Notwithstanding seizures in many states, major interdictions take place at the airports, especially MMIA. Given the poor quality of scanners, which sometimes do not work, and low intelligence capacity of drug law enforcement officials within states and communities, it is quite difficult to determine a clear trend in terms of cocaine trafficking, distribution and use. What is evident, however, is that the number and volume of cocaine seizures in Nigeria is significant.

## Heroin

Heroin is produced in South Asia, especially in Afghanistan. It is trafficked through several routes, including West Africa, to markets in North America and Europe. The NDLEA 2015-2017 annual report showed an increase in the seizure of heroin over those years: 30 kg were seized

in 2015, 66.3 kg in 2016 and 85.4 kg in 2017. Fifty drug law enforcement officers who completed questionnaires for this assessment were asked about the frequency of various crimes committed by organized crime groups in Nigeria. Nearly all (96.0 per cent) reported frequent trafficking of cocaine compared to 77 per cent who said they saw frequent trafficking of heroin.

The growth of heroin trafficking through countries along the eastern and southern Africa coasts could result in an uptick of trafficking in Nigeria. This would be driven by the relatively high volume of air traffic between Nigeria and countries in southern and eastern Africa, as well as the large Nigerian diaspora in those countries.

## Cannabis

Cultivation and use of cannabis have long histories in Nigeria. In recent years however, cannabis plantations have been discovered in an increasing number of states throughout the country, while production, cross-border trafficking and domestic distribution have grown more sophisticated and effective. Groups involved in cannabis production and distribution often have semi-hierarchical structures.

NDLEA field officers and commanders have better knowledge and understanding of the trade of cannabis than of cocaine or heroin. Interviews, questionnaires and group discussions with 50 drug law enforcement and regulatory officials (including 36 state commanders) throughout Nigeria provided insightful information, as follows:

- ▶ Activities and control of the cannabis market are compartmentalized into three areas: cultivation of cannabis; recruitment of labourers (farm hands); and warehousing and transportation. Each component has principals and agents.
- ▶ Key players dominating the trade conceal their involvement. They employ lawyers to represent their interests whenever their agents are arrested.
- ▶ Cannabis plantations in Ekiti, Ondo and Osun States rely on migrant labour from Benue and Taraba States, and recruitment is often deceptive.

Cannabis is planted in March and April, and harvested in October and November. Dry season farming is increasing. Cannabis farms are more prevalent the South Western Ekiti, Ondo, Osun and Oyo States. There are also cannabis farms in Edo State, in the South South zone, which shares a border with Ondo State. Cannabis produced in those states is transported and warehoused most often in Delta State. Some products are also warehoused in Oyo and Lagos States. In warehouses, cannabis leaves are compressed and packaged for local and foreign markets.

A complicated cannabis transportation network within the country has evolved. Violence and corruption have been used to protect the trade. Many NDLEA officials have been killed during operations on cannabis farms and in investigations of distribution channels. Trafficking of the drug to other West Africa countries and beyond occurs along Nigeria's western borders in the northern parts of the country.

Small-scale farming has been reported in several states, especially in the North Central Kogi, Plateau and Benue States, and in Taraba in the North East. Migrant labourers on cannabis plantations in the South West are recruited primarily from Kogi, Benue, Akwa Ibom and Cross River States. Labourers are transported to plantations in forests during the night. This ensures that they are unable to leave without the consent and assistance of cannabis farm owners. The following trends are also emerging:

- a. The import of compressed cannabis from Ghana through communities in Ogun State that border the Republic of Benin.

- b.** Intercropping of cannabis with licit agricultural crops is common in many parts of the country.
- c.** Abi, a community in Delta State, was reported by some NDLEA officers to be a major hub for warehousing cannabis that is harvested in Edo, Delta and Ondo States. NDLEA enforcement officers mentioned a woman they called Madam Akpos, who is said to be a leader in the illicit trade in cannabis in Abi and have the support of both residents and political leaders. In 2014, 19 tons of seized cannabis were linked to her operation. However, only the driver was arrested. NDLEA officers also spoke of a former state deputy governor (a professor of law) who exhorted them not to disturb those involved in cannabis cultivation and distribution. Abi is inaccessible due to high rates of violence perpetrated by criminal groups. Officers observed that the illicit drug trade is embedded in an annual festival held each February, which is said to honour the person who introduced cannabis into the community.
- d.** Cannabis production and trade are on the rise in Gombe, Benue, Plateau, Adamawa and Rivers States.
- e.** Cannabis is the dominant illicit drug traded in Osun State. Traffickers take advantage of unutilized and difficult to access forests in the state.
- f.** People from Delta State predominantly own cannabis farms. Farmhands are mostly migrant labourers who are unfamiliar with the terrain. Once taken to remote cannabis plantations, migrant labourers are unable to quit without the assistance of the owners.
- g.** Drug law enforcement officers reported that a faction of the Odu'a People's Congress, an ethnic militia led by Elewe, protects cannabis plantations and farmers in Osun State. Cannabis farmers there have taken over land designated for cocoa farming.
- h.** Harvested cannabis products are transported to Delta, Lagos and Oyo States.

In Delta State, cannabis cultivation and warehousing are controlled predominantly by groups that operate from within communities. The groups establish plantations in Ekiti, Ondo and Osun States. They also maintain warehouses for the harvested cannabis leaves in several states.

- a.** An Agunugba group in Kwale controls the trade of cannabis in that community and beyond. Individuals recruited into the group go through initiation. An annual festival in Kwale is used as a cover for coordination of activities related to cannabis production.
- b.** Warehouses for cannabis products are located in Abbi community.<sup>34</sup> Groups involved in the cannabis trade there are violent and several NDLEA officials have been killed in the area.
- c.** Cannabis products are warehoused in rented apartments. Loss (usually by theft) of cannabis from an apartment may result in the killing of the landlord or individual employed to guard the drug.
- d.** The majority of the people controlling cannabis activities in Kwale and Abbi live in Lagos and Edo States; some have investments in Lagos. Cannabis from Abbi and Kwale are transported to Lagos, and eastern and northern states.
- e.** Since a joint raid by military and NDLEA officials in 2016, drug groups in Abbi have kept drugs in forests, protected by armed gangs.

Cannabis from Delta and Edo States is distributed in Taraba. There is also trafficking to Cameroon through Baga, a border town in the state, which is only accessible by motorcycle. Small-scale production has been reported among Tiv farmers in Takum, Wukari and Bali.

<sup>34</sup> Ndokwa, West Local Government Area, Delta State.

**Supply and demand of cannabis pose serious problems and threats to the country in the following respects:**

- ▶ It is widely available, affordable and abused.
- ▶ Young people and commercial vehicle drivers in the lower socioeconomic strata of society are particularly prone to substance abuse.
- ▶ The diversion of land and labour from cultivation of food crops to cannabis farming poses serious threats to food security.
- ▶ The trade is associated with environmental degradation and pollution from herbicides and deforestation.
- ▶ Collusion of cannabis farm owners and forest guards inhibits effective drug law enforcement and encourages impunity.
- ▶ Law enforcement officers collude with cannabis traders by providing escort for vehicles conveying cannabis or sometimes even using official vehicles to transport cannabis, thereby shielding offenders from the law.
- ▶ Facilities to promote prevention, treatment and rehabilitation are inadequate. This may result in a large number of people with disorders associated with cannabis use.

## Methamphetamine

Nigeria's capacity to produce methamphetamines has been growing over the past ten years. Skills for production were acquired from trainers and technicians recruited from South America. Over the past decade, no fewer than six methamphetamine laboratories were discovered in Lagos, and 15 have been discovered across the country. Persons arrested in connection with these laboratories were nationals of Nigeria, Bolivia and Mexico. The foreigners were technical experts recruited to produce the drug and train Nigerians. Nigerians owned all 15 of the laboratories discovered to date.

Laboratories for producing methamphetamine have been discovered in eastern parts of the country. in Ozubulu (in the Ekwusigo Local Government Area) and Ifitedunu, (in the Dunukofia Local Government Area). Information from drug law enforcement indicated that methamphetamines are distributed through many channels, including the postal service.

The main destination countries of methamphetamine produced in Nigeria are Japan, South Africa, Malaysia and China.

In 2016, the Nigerian High Commission in Japan informed the NDLEA of the arrest of a Nigerian in possession of methamphetamine who was subsequently convicted and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment in that country.

Also in 2016, NDLEA discovered the largest methamphetamine laboratory in the country in Asaba, Delta. Four Mexicans and five Nigerians were arrested for operating the laboratory. In September 2017, a methamphetamine laboratory was discovered in Amakpuze village, Udi Local Government Area of Enugu State, where 20 kg of methamphetamine were seized. Citizens of the Philippines and Nigeria were arrested in connection with operation of the laboratory – their financier was a Nigerian man married to a South African woman.

NDLEA has seized significant quantities of methamphetamine over the past three years: 2015, 782.43 kg; 2016, 1,352.56 kg; and 2017, 410.82 kg. Data for those three years do not show a clear trend in production and trafficking of methamphetamine in Nigeria.

## Drug importation and diversion: ephedrine, tramadol and codeine

Widespread trafficking and misuse of tramadol has been reported in several West African countries and its consumption has also been found among non-state armed groups in the region.<sup>35</sup> Frequent diversion of controlled drugs from legitimate to illicit sources contributes to the availability and illicit use of such drugs. NAFDAC regulates controlled substances, including ephedrine, and issues permits for their import. Table 2 presents statistics on approved and cleared ephedrine, pseudo-ephedrine and tramadol for 2015 through 2017. Tramadol capsules higher than 100 mg are prohibited in Nigeria.

NAFDAC regulates ephedrine, a precursor for the manufacture of methamphetamine. The organization monitors the approved quantity for prescription and other uses. However, inadequate resources limit its ability to effectively monitor diversion of drugs to unapproved purposes. According to NDLEA records, seizures decreased over the three years from 2015 to 2017: 2017, 168.85 kg; 2016, 718.27 kg; and 2015, 785.10 kg.<sup>36</sup>

In 2017 and 2018, media reports of large seizures of the drug attracted the attention of both the government and public to the trafficking and misuse of tramadol.

**Table 2: Importation of ephedrine, pseudo-ephedrine and tramadol**

Drugs	Raw Products			Finished Products		
	INCB estimates in kg	Quantity approved in kg	Quantity cleared in kg	INCB estimates in kg	Quantity approved in kg	Quantity cleared in kg
<b>Ephedrine</b>						
2015	9,650	9,576	9,376	500	807	84
2016	9,650	7,017	6,538	500	NA	NA
2017	9,650	8,975	8,975	500	82	95
<b>Pseudoephedrine</b>						
2015	5,823	3,380	3,705	15,000	12,881	10,332
2016	5,823	2,725	2,525	15,000	13,693	7,232
2017	5,823	5,890	5,370	15,000	14,157	9,607
<b>Tramadol</b>						
2015	NA	2,500	2,600	NA	14,150	3,367
2016	NA	2,200	600	NA	9,600	718
2017	NA	0.0255	NA	NA	6,447	924

Source: NAFDAC. NA = not available

## Money laundering of profits from drug production and trafficking in Nigeria

Proceeds of criminal activities are laundered through many legitimate and illegitimate enterprises and assets. In the 1980s and 1990s, male traffickers were believed to launder proceeds from drug trafficking in real estate, used car sales and financial services firms. Many financial services companies that grew in the late 1980s collapsed in the 1990s due to economic and political crises in the country. Female traffickers laundered proceeds from their criminal activities in

35 Laura Salm-Reifferscheidt (2018). "Tramadol: Africa's opioid crisis". *Lancet*, Vol. 391: pp. 1982-1983.

36 NDLEA Annual Reports (2015), (2016), (2017).



boutiques. In the late 1980s, commercial business districts of Ikeja and Lagos Island witnessed rapid expansion of boutiques selling foreign goods, many of which were used to launder proceeds of trafficking. The NDLEA sporadically raided used car sales depots and boutiques in the 1990s. While those types of businesses remain significant channels for laundering today, drug law enforcement commanders say that politics is now the most common tool for cleaning illicit proceeds (table 3). Forfeited assets to the government are poorly managed and become worthless due to lengthy trials, the lack of legal asset management to prevent loss of value, and absence of effective guidelines for managing seized and forfeited assets within the agency. Seized and forfeited drugs are periodically destroyed – and those actions widely publicized.

**Table 3: Sector in which proceeds of drugs are laundered**

Sector	Per cent of respondents
Shares in companies	10
Real estate	20
Financial institutions	8
Healthcare services	8
Educational institutions	4
Politics	44
Commercial enterprises	4

According to respondents of a questionnaire administered for this assessment, proceeds of drug crimes are also invested in commerce, especially in the following areas: electronics, exotic cars, supermarket goods, counterfeit drugs and petroleum products.

### Use of financial intelligence in policing criminal drug markets

Tracking the nexus between drug trafficking and money laundering requires efficient intelligence, investigation and prosecution of suspects arrested for either drug offences or for terrorism. The Nigerian criminal justice system is weak in this area. Improved efficiencies in the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU) and the Special Control Unit Against Money Laundering (SCUML) would assist in the detection of laundering proceeds of crime.

Functions of the NFIU include:

1. Financial intelligence
2. Financial profiling to identify suspicious transactions
3. Shares outcome of its financial profiling with appropriate anti-corruption and other law enforcement agencies

An NFIU official observed in an interview that financial profiling by the agencies showed conspiracies in financial transactions among individuals to cover up illicit funds.<sup>37</sup> Political actors are among those involved in such transactions. Some bank officials were also reported to conspire with their customers to conceal illicit funds. They leak information to their clients concerning on-going requests for information on accounts.

Major problems encountered by the agency in achieving effective service delivery were request for information on financial transactions of an individual by different anti-corruption agencies; lack of feedback by requesting agencies on the reliability of financial analysis provided to them.

<sup>37</sup> Interview conducted with a senior female official of the agency, 15 May 2018.

NFIU does not investigate the sources of suspicious financial transactions. It is therefore unable to track down suspicious financial transactions that are limited to individuals' activities or that involve proceeds from crimes committed by organized criminal networks. These limitations render NFIU's focus and quality of intelligence rudimentary.

SCUML was established to enhance measures against money laundering and the use of proceeds of crime to fund terrorism. It was also intended to fulfil Nigeria's obligation under the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). Its focus is designated non-financial institutions (DNFIs), such as hotels, not-for-profit organizations, supermarkets, jewellery shops, estate developers and managers, and car dealers. The unit requires that such businesses maintain records of all financial transactions in excess of \$1,000 and file currency transaction reports (CTRs) on them. DNFIs submit periodic reports of cash transactions to SCUML. The unit is one of the organizations responsible for implementing the Anti-Money Laundering/Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) Regulations for Designated Non-Financial Business and Professions in Nigeria 2013 (DNFBP Regulations).<sup>38</sup>

### Nexus (if any) between drug trafficking and terrorism in Nigeria

The relationship between drugs and violence is often mentioned in literature. However, in criminology, that relationship is recognized as complex. It can manifest in least in three ways: drug use may increase a person's disposition to violence due to diminished self-control; it may induce an individual to commit a crime, especially robbery, to obtain money for drugs; and it may be used to protect organized criminal groups. It is widely speculated that illicit drugs play a significant role in violent conflicts and insurgencies in Nigeria.<sup>39</sup>

No concrete evidence exists of the linkage between drug trafficking and terrorism. But there is a risk that drug trafficking organizations, seeking political influence, could financially support ethno-religious militants and terrorists in some parts of the country that are engulfed in ethnic and religious conflicts. Field drug law enforcement officers provided anecdotal accounts of drugs being trafficked to Cameroon and proceeds paying for the import of arms by militants in Niger Delta for various violent attacks and kidnappings. There were also unconfirmed reports of ISIS using citizens of Nigeria, Niger and Tunisia for drug trafficking.

### Nexus (if any) between drug trafficking and other organized crime activities

Organized crime groups in the country engage in a wide range of activities, including: trafficking in persons, drugs, arms and other goods; Internet fraud; oil theft; and smuggling of goods. Nigerian organized crime groups are suspected to operate with loose and flexible structures that enable them to adjust to risks associated with law enforcement strategies as well as to changes in demand for goods on local and global markets. Using this model, groups can engage in multiple criminal markets. There is no reliable evidence of a strong nexus between drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime.

### Assessment of risk for drug trafficking through airports, seaports and land borders

Judging by arrests and seizures, illicit drugs are trafficked through seaports, airports and land borders. Seizures at airports are more frequent and attract greater attention.

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.scuml.org/userfiles/SCUML%20FINAL%20REGULATORY%20DOCUMENT%5B1%5D.pdf>.

<sup>39</sup> (2017). *Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme and International Alert*, Out of the shadows Adopting a peacebuilding approach to the social effects of drug use in Nigeria.

However, NAFDAC seized large quantities of drugs at seaports between 2015 and 2018. Statistics from the Ports Inspection Directorate on tramadol seizures at seaports from 2015 to 2018 included the following:

- a. A 40-foot container with tramadol capsules at Apapa Port in 2015.
- b. Two 40-foot containers with 200 mg and 225 mg, respectively, at Tin Can Port in 2017.
- c. Six 40-foot containers containing 120 mg, 220 mg and 225 mg of tramadol capsules; eight separate seizures of 40-foot containers with 120 mg and 220 mg of tramadol capsules at Apapa Port.
- d. Two separate seizures of 40-foot and 20-foot containers with tramadol at Tin Can Port.
- e. A 40-foot container with tramadol at Port Harcourt Port.

The Nigeria Customs Service seized cannabis at various land borders (including Imeko, Kamba, Seme, Idiroko, and Luma Babana) from 2015 through 2017. According to data provided for this assessment, the service seized 95 kg of methamphetamine and ephedrine at Apapa Port in May 2016, 38.85 kg of methamphetamine at Nnamdi Azikwe International Airport, Abuja, in February 2015, and 48 kg of cannabis at the Enugu Airport in November 2017.

Officers of the Nigerian Customs Service expressed concern about weak clearing procedures at private ports that may have facilitated large quantities of tramadol being seized at seaports in 2017 and early 2018. Large numbers of seizures at airports indicate air travel remains the most popular means of transport, especially in respect to cocaine and heroin, and increasingly for psychotropic drugs. Trafficking through land borders is not as widespread as through other channels. This may not reflect the scale of trafficking across land borders, but, instead, the priority and capacity of drug control agencies and other border policing services. Nigeria shares vast land borders with four West African countries, and has coastal and maritime boundaries. Information obtained from law enforcement officials and newspaper reports indicate that psychotropic drugs and cannabis are trafficked across Nigerian borders in Ogun, Kwara, Sokoto, Taraba, Cross River, and Borno States into neighboring countries.

## 5. ORGANIZED CRIMES AND CRIMINAL GROUPS IN NIGERIA

Intelligence and law enforcement agencies in Nigeria have limited knowledge or awareness of organized crime groups involved in the trade of illicit drugs.<sup>40</sup> Less than a quarter (22 per cent) of the 50 drug enforcement commanders and officers that completed questionnaires for this assessment were aware of the existence of foreign-based organized crime groups in the country; 42 per cent were unaware and said they 36 per cent could not answer. Respondents who reported knowing about the existence of foreigners in organized crimes in the country were asked to name the nationalities of those involved. Identified nationalities were Mexican, Chinese, Middle Eastern, Colombians, and other South Americans. A fifth (20 per cent) of respondents were aware of Nigerian organized crime groups operating outside Nigeria, 50 per cent said they were not aware, while 30 per cent said they could not answer. Poor awareness of law enforcement officials is not surprising given that intelligence-led policing styles are not emphasized. Very little emphasis is given to intelligence gathering by Nigerian security agencies, which are predominantly reactionary in their organizational orientation, training and responses.

Law enforcement officers were asked if they agreed that organized crime groups have influence on different officials, groups and sectors in the country. Their responses showed that they believe criminal groups exercise significant influence on different groups and sectors in the country (table 3). During group discussions, it was evident that officers perceive the influence of organized crime, especially in illicit drug enterprises, but are unable to identify members of such groups or their operational structures.

**Table 3: Influences and responses to organized crimes in Nigeria**

Manifestations/influence and responses	Per cent of respondents that agreed
Organized crime groups have significant influence on elected public officials	10
Organized crime groups have significant influence within Nigerian economy	69
Organized crime groups involved in illicit drugs have significant influence on elected public officials	70
Organized crime groups involved in illicit drugs have significant influence on Nigerian economy	76
Organized crime groups influence media to suppress news about their operations	78
Organized crime groups in the country use violence and intimidation to conceal their activities	78
Organized crime groups use corruption to conceal and protect their activities	84
Organized crime groups support political parties with funds	92
Organized crime groups in the country have links to several countries	52
Combating organized crime is high on government agenda	18
Fight against organized crime is high on political agenda of present government	76

<sup>40</sup> Responses from questionnaire administered to law enforcement officers (NDLEA – 37; NAFDAC – 4; NCS – 3; NPS – 2; and others – 4).

## Mapping actors in criminal drug markets

Very little is known about the structure of Nigeria's organized criminal groups. This gap in knowledge seems to be the result of the groups' loose organizational structures, which are meant to protect operations and ensure loyalty. Leaders of organized criminal enterprises recruit partners and couriers from members of their family, clans, villages and ethnic groups. During group discussions with drug law enforcement commanders and officials, the following groups were identified:

- ▶ Nigerian criminal groups operating in West Africa based predominantly in Lagos and controlling the Nigeria-Benin-Ghana trafficking route.
- ▶ Nigerian criminal groups operating from source countries of heroin and cocaine. They are involved in drug trafficking through Nigeria or other West Africa countries. Such groups operate from São Paulo, Brazil for cocaine trafficking, or from Pakistan and Thailand for heroin trafficking.
- ▶ Europe-based groups involved in trafficking into and within Europe. They collaborate with or employ European citizens and recruit Nigerians as couriers for drugs into Europe.
- ▶ Relay groups, which organize drug trafficking in the form of relay of couriers. The relay trafficking mode involves couriers trafficking drugs for only a portion of the route and handing the substances over to other couriers along designated routes until the drugs reach their final destinations. This approach uses couriers within the areas where they are less likely to be profiled as drug traffickers. The United Arab Emirates, Qatar, South Africa and Kenya are some of the countries where Nigerian traffickers changed drug trafficking batons.
- ▶ Cannabis traders in Agunugba of Kwale in Delta State, ostensibly an ethnic association, are used as a platform and shield for cannabis production and distribution. The chairman of the association is alleged to be involved in the coordination of planting in many locations.

Participants in the group discussions identified four criminal networks operating in Abuja:

1. International operators dominated by Igbo speaking people involved in distribution of cocaine, heroin and psychotropic substances.
2. Gwoza group involved in crack cocaine and operating from Area 1 Garki and Wuse Zone 2.
3. Kebbi group involved in tramadol and codeine distribution and operating from Wuse Zone 4.
4. Some bureau de change operators, who are concentrated in Wuse Zone 4, facilitate money laundering.

Patterns of organized criminal activities were also identified in Akwa Ibom State, where interdictions and arrests indicate the following:

- ▶ Kinship-based groups are involved in cocaine trafficking.
- ▶ Illicit drug activities are more prevalent at Abak and Aka Roads in Uyo, the state capital. Drug law enforcement agencies characterize dealers of illicit drugs in the state as resilient – many return to the trade after arrest and conviction.
- ▶ Illicit drugs in the state are largely sourced from Lagos.

## Responses to criminal markets in Nigeria

Several legal and policy measures have been introduced since early the early 1980s to stem illicit drug supply and demand in Nigeria. Laws were revised with enhanced penalties and, fulfilling its obligations under the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988, Nigeria created the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA, Act, 1989). In addition, the government has signed bilateral and multilateral agreements to enhance mutual assistance, and efforts have been made to attract assistance from international development partners like UNODC and US and European development agencies. Legal instruments have also been adopted at the regional and continental levels. Despite these efforts, the criminal drug market remains a major threat to the country's development, security and global reputation.

The National Drug Control Master Plan is the policy framework for drug control in Nigeria – the current plan runs from 2015 to 2019. Two previous plans were introduced in 1999 and 2008. The plan was intended to integrate drug control approaches by bringing together all relevant governmental departments and non-governmental organizations to design measures for combating illicit drugs through law enforcement, control of access to legal but controlled drugs, as well as drug abuse prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. According to the plan:

“The NDCMP 2015-2019 promotes rule of law and human rights approaches to addressing the public health and criminal justice challenges and threats of illicit drug use, as well as to combating drug-related organized crime. Overall, its objective is to strengthen responses to drugs in order to contribute to the enhanced health, security and well-being of all Nigerians” (NDCMP 2015: 7).

The plan recognized that “Nigeria lacks reliable and comprehensive data on the prevalence of drug use, substances used, and the number of people with drug disorders. Existing data comes (sic) from a few hospitals, surveys and studies” (NDCMP 2015: 7).

Strategic pillars of the plan are law enforcement, demand reduction, and availability, access and control of narcotics and psychotropics. A lead coordinating agency was designated for each of the three pillars as follows: law enforcement (NDLEA); demand reduction (Ministries of Health/NDLEA/NACA); availability, access and control of narcotics and psychotropics (NDLEA/NAFDAC).<sup>41</sup> The NDCMP Secretariat/National Coordinating Unit located in NDLEA is responsible for overall coordination of the implementation of the plan.<sup>42</sup>

The Inter-Ministerial Committee on Drug Control (IMC), responsible for implementation development and oversight, is comprised of 35 government security, regulatory, technical and administrative departments and agencies. To implement the Master Plan, an operation plan and monitoring template were developed.

Effort has been made to sustain and broaden international cooperation. Nigeria has increasingly cooperated with other countries, particularly the US, UK, Switzerland, Japan, and Germany, on intelligence sharing, joint operations, and mutual legal assistance. One example of such collaboration occurred in 2015. A Nigerian involved in trafficking six kg of methamphetamine to Japan was arrested there; the Nigerian Intelligence Agency in Japan was informed and transmitted that information to NDLEA. The trafficker was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment in Japan. Information on the arrest and conviction of Nigerians in many countries is also shared with relevant Nigerian government agencies abroad and at home. Germany provided

41 NDLEA – National Drug Law Enforcement Agency; NACA - National Agency for the Control of HIV/AIDS; NAFDAC – National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration Control

42 NDCMP – National Drug Control Master Plan

information that 20 Nigerians were arrested in that country in 2015 and 2016. A cocaine routes programme funded by the EU facilitated intelligence sharing and collaboration between countries of origin, trafficking routes and destinations. An association of drug law enforcement agencies in Africa was also established, with the participation of Nigeria. However, benefits from these initiatives will only be significant if drug law enforcement agencies within each country are properly structured, oriented and resourced.

In 2017, the mid-term review of the NDCMP 2015-2019 highlighted some efforts to implement the plan. It noted the arrests of major high-profile players in the criminal drug market but found no evidence of such. The report also looked at the capacity building activities being implemented through the EU-funded project being implemented by UNODC. This raises the level of political will and sustainability of capacity building within agencies. It also noted that funding for the implementing agencies remains inadequate and unpredictable. Weak intra-agency coordination in the “the planning, implementation and reporting NDCMP related activities” as well as absence “of prioritization of NDCMP activities and its supervision by top management of MDAs on the implementation of the plan” were observed.<sup>43</sup> The report noted the lack of proper “implementation monitoring practices, such as incomplete documentation of activities, unsystematic recordkeeping including means of verification and late reporting.”

Despite these measures and efforts, several constraints on effective control of illicit drug supply and demand persist. Respondents to the assessment questionnaire identified obstacles to effective measures against illicit drug in the country as: lack of reliable data and statistics (19.0 per cent); lack of modern technology (14.3 per cent); lack of synergy among law enforcement agencies (14.3 per cent); inadequate legislation (11.9 per cent); lack of funding for research (11.9 per cent); lack of funds (11.9 per cent); lack of political will (11.9 per cent); and involvement of top-ranking government officials in illicit drug trade (4.8 per cent).

### Capacity and constraints of responses to illicit drugs

The threats that drugs pose are determined by several factors. The most significant factors involve the extent and pattern of the drug problem and the capacity to effectively respond to criminal drug markets through coordinated multi-sectorial and multi-disciplinary supply and demand reduction measures. As described above, since the 1980s, successive Nigerian governments have introduced measures to prevent and control illicit drugs, enacting laws and establishing two agencies for drug law enforcement and drug regulation.<sup>44</sup> In addition to these agencies, other law enforcement and regulatory agencies – including the Nigeria Customs Service and the Nigeria Police Force – are empowered to interdict illicit drugs.

Analyses of the data collected through interviews and group discussions with drug enforcement and regulatory officers, and statistical reports from drug enforcement and regulatory agencies, revealed the following constraints concerning responses to illicit drugs:

1. Inadequate political will and investment in adopting and implementing effective approaches and measures to tackle illicit drugs by successive Nigerian governments. The legal, institutional and policy frameworks – as well as infrastructure – currently employed for the prevention and control of illicit drug supply and demand are inadequate and, in some cases, counterproductive. Despite substantial foreign government assistance, the Nigerian government often neglects the problem; particular shortcomings include the government’s failure to consistently review

43 Federal Government of Nigeria. Mid-Term Evaluation Report National Drug Control Master Plan 2015 – 2019: p. 6.

44 These are the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) established in 1989 and the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Drug Control (NAFDAC) established in 1993.

drug supply and demand legislation and policies, to provide adequate resources, or oversight of operations and performance.

2. Patterns and trends of illicit drug supply and demand and other forms of organized crime are not given adequate attention or analysis – and this leads to a lack of understanding of the problem. Intelligence-led operations and research-informed policies are not prioritized or adequately funded. As a result, there is dearth of information necessary for efficient drug control operations and mapping of organized criminal networks in the illicit drug market. There is also a knowledge gap in regards to the extent, trend, pattern and effects of drug demand-related behaviours and disorders. Comprehensive data and statistical management systems are lacking, as are adequate investment and capacity in intelligence-led enforcement. One of the consequences of these inadequacies is high a dependence on intelligence sharing by foreign drug enforcement agencies.
3. Intelligence-led drug law enforcement approaches have not received adequate attention, which constrains the effectiveness of agencies. This also leads to a lack of adequate understanding of the relationships among actors in the illicit drug trade at various levels or stages in the supply-demand chain, limiting officials' ability to effectively respond. While this gap is being addressed by the on-going EU supported project being implemented by UNODC, there is concern over its sustainability, which depends on available resources and on the orientation of organizations in terms of strategic approaches to drug law enforcement.
4. While coca and opium poppy, from which cocaine and heroin are produced, are not cultivated in Nigeria, cannabis is widely grown in many Nigerian states. However, drug law enforcement agencies have inadequate resources and facilities to undertake efficient aerial surveillance of plantations, acquire necessary intelligence, and conduct effective investigation, prosecution, and operations to disrupt the cannabis trade.
5. Capacity and facilities for drug prevention, treatment and rehabilitation are inadequate. Until 2016 and 2017, when NENDU conducted national surveys of healthcare facilities and users, knowledge of available facilities, resource gaps and drug use-related disorders was limited. A recent national survey on drug use conducted under the EU-funded and UNODC-implemented programme has also provided hitherto unavailable data that allow robust analysis of the incidence and prevalence of drug use. The surveys revealed that drug use-related disorders are significant and there are inadequate facilities and human resources to address the problem.
6. Officials in drug law enforcement and regulatory agencies are convinced that organized crime groups are active in the illicit drug market. However, substantiated evidence of the existence, structure, and membership of organized groups involvement in drug crimes is limited, and based mostly on anecdotal information. Drug law enforcement officials said multiple times during group discussions that while organized crime groups exist in the country, adequate attention and resources have not been given to detecting and mapping them. A widely used strategy for tracing organized crime is the adoption of long-term intelligence gathering and investigations targeting drug trafficking incidents and suspects. The aim is to profile suspects and map interconnections among organized crime group and networks.
7. Drug control in Nigeria relies on assistance from foreign governments and development partners, especially UNODC. Worrisome is the substantial offering of assistance for critical training in operations, intelligence gathering and deployment, and acquisition of equipment, which is not sustainable in the long run.



8. NDLEA is designated as the lead agency for illicit drug supply suppression and control in Nigeria. However, it is inadequately equipped to perform this mandate.
9. Political, enforcement and judicial institutions are not adequately strong and are vulnerable to corruption.
10. NDLEA has not been adequately equipped to gather intelligence, train personnel, or acquire and deploy technology. This hinders the country's drug law enforcement policy and actions.
11. Security and law enforcement agencies in many countries, including the UK, Canada and US, have reduced hierarchies to promote prompt response to threats and improve efficiency. Nigerian security agencies, including NDLEA, maintain multi-layer hierarchical organizational structures, which does not promote the quick decision-making required for effective drug law enforcement. This structure stifles initiative, cuts timely responses and drags efficiency.
12. Until recently, gathering and analysis of operational and other data to inform strategic and operational decisions did not receive adequate attention. Data gathered by various departments and organizations were not adequately analysed to identify commonalities, patterns and trends. NDLEA is addressing this gap with projects (implemented by UNODC) on intelligence training and coordinated data analysis. The sustainability of these projects when funding ends is a cause of concern. While these training programmes have bolstered the capacity of NDLEA, Nigeria has a poor record of sustaining projects once foreign support ends.
13. Drug law enforcement organizations are not robust enough to prevent and control drug supply and demand through efficient intelligence, investigation, training, scientific and technological aids, and inter-agency collaboration at local and international levels.
14. Law enforcement and security officials are often complicit, and there is a clear lack of cooperation between them. Examples include: a lack of collaboration among officials at land, air and sea ports; and the involvement of some airline, security and law enforcement personnel in aiding traffickers.
15. Prosecution of suspects in courts is also problematic. Suspects are granted bail without guarantee of their subsequent appearance in court for trial. Professional bail bond providers are allowed to take suspects on bail, without adequate verification of their home or work address, and many then abscond. This is a consequence of collusion between lawyers, suspects, bond service providers, courts, and prison officials. When convicted, people are often given inadequate sentences. Drug law enforcement officials also mentioned instances of political pressure being applied to law enforcement agencies to release suspects.
16. Private or bond terminal operations are not closely monitored, and are sometimes used for trafficking illicit drugs or facilitating other organized crimes.
17. Corruption is widespread in Nigeria and hinders effective implementation of measures against illicit drugs. Most drug law enforcement officials who participated in group discussions identified corruption as the most serious threat to development and security in Nigeria. Their comments about corruption:
  - a. It is widespread and endemic at all strata of society.
  - b. It undermines economic planning and management.
  - c. It depletes economic and financial resources for development.
  - d. It undermines effective, fair and speedy law enforcement and administration of criminal justice.
  - e. It undermines effective service delivery to citizens.

- f. It engenders unemployment and associated deprivations.
- g. It engenders crimes, including drug trafficking, intended to provide livelihoods.
- h. It fuels organized crimes by providing illicit funds and subverting efficient law enforcement.
- i. It erodes democratic and good governance.
- j. It engenders crimes that threaten citizens and national security.
- k. It causes or aggravates economic and social adversities and deprivations, including poverty, inflation, inequality and poor service delivery.
- l. It shields organized crimes through protection rackets by security, law enforcement, and judicial and other public regulatory agencies.
- m. It influences and distorts the political process, participation, representation and decision-making.

Nigeria faces serious drug supply and demand problems and has very limited capacity to deal with them. This could enable the expansion of the criminal drug market and organized crime, with negative impacts on Nigeria's economic, political and social development and security.

## 6. THREATS ASSOCIATED WITH ILLICIT DRUGS

The Master Plan (NDCMP 2015: 7-8) diagnosed the drug situation in Nigeria as comprising the following conditions, trends and patterns:

1. The country is a trafficking route for cocaine from South America to Europe.
2. Cannabis is produced on large and commercial-scale plantations in South Western states for local and foreign markets.
3. Capacity for production and export of methamphetamine is increasing.
4. Organized crime in Nigeria is globally perceived as “The most active, connected, dispersed and entrepreneurial of any organized crime networks in the world.”
5. Reliable and comprehensive data on various dimensions of illicit drugs are lacking.
6. Sensitization and drug prevention programmes are insufficient.
7. Political and financial support for programmes is low.
8. Drug users are stigmatized and held in low regard by the general public, which deters users from utilizing the limited services available.
9. Inadequate attention is given to possible links between drug use and HIV/AIDS.
10. Use of licit narcotic and psychotropic drugs for medical and scientific purposes is limited by a lack of quantifiable evidence of the need for these substances.
11. Professionals have inadequate awareness about the availability, accessibility, and distribution mechanisms for narcotic drugs.
12. The country has illicit facilities for precursor substances and diversions of narcotics through unauthorized channels.

These constraints, identified in 2015, persisted in 2018 to varying degrees.

Threat levels posed by a condition or phenomenon are determined by both risks of occurrence of an event and the capability to identify, adopt and effectively implement measures to prevent or mitigate it. Criminal drug markets poses serious threats to economic, political, social and health development and wellbeing. Fifty drug law enforcement commanders and officials were asked about the effects of Nigerians’ involvement in illicit drug trafficking outside Nigeria. Responses included: bad image for Nigeria (47.5 per cent); stigmatization of Nigerians (25.0 per cent); money laundering (17.5 per cent ); and sentencing of Nigerian citizens to death in foreign countries (10.0 per cent).

The impacts of the illicit drug trade by Nigerians within the country were: mental illness (51.0 per cent); drug addiction (16.3 per cent); criminal activities (10.2 per cent); robbery (6.1 per cent); insecurity (6.1 per cent); lack of human development (6.1 per cent); and terrorism (4.1 per cent).

To determine the level of risk, knowledge and intelligence about potential threats and effective counter-measures are required. Therefore, in determining threats associated with the illicit drug market in Nigeria, it is imperative that threat assessments take into consideration the following factors:

- a. How much is known about the existence, structure, membership and mode of operation of organized criminal group involved in the illicit drug market?
- b. How much is known about the size and scope of the illicit drug market in terms of the extent, patterns, trends and sources of drug supply and demand?
- c. How much is known about measures that can efficiently prevent or mitigate levels of drug supply and demand?

These highlight the importance of knowledge and intelligence in the control of the illicit drug market.

### *Knowledge and intelligence gaps*

Adequate knowledge is essential in preventing and controlling the criminal drug market. Currently, as already discussed, knowledge and intelligence on drug supply and demand are lacking. This gap may be attributed to the orientation of policy and implementation in Nigeria, including prevention and control of illicit drugs. Proactive approaches to drug prevention and control emphasize acquisition and utilization of intelligence or knowledge in policy-making and operations. However, reactive approaches result in a reliance on routine searches, raids, seizures, prosecution and harsh punishment.

The intelligence or knowledge-led approach helps dismantle or significantly disrupt organized criminal groups, while the reactive law enforcement approach tends to prioritize apprehension of lower and dispensable couriers and seizure of illicit drugs. For optimal operational success, both approaches should be adopted with intelligence and knowledge forming the bedrock of reactive operations. Nigeria has emphasized the reactive law enforcement approach to curtailing criminal markets, with insignificant attention given to intelligence and knowledge based on comprehensive data and empirical research on production, distribution and abuse of illicit drugs in the country. Therefore, knowledge of the scale of threats associated with drugs is lacking and, without it, no efficient strategy can be developed to tackle illicit drug demand and supply.

Inadequate intelligence on the existence, structure, membership, and operation of organized criminal entrepreneurs and enterprises, including involvement in the production and distribution of illicit drugs, is the fundamental constraint on drug control in Nigeria. This leads to a lack of understanding of the structure and size of the criminal drug market. These conditions constitute obstacles for policymakers and the public when it comes to appreciating the scope of the current problem, deterring responses from being developed. This fundamental knowledge gap needs to be addressed through adoption of integrated proactive and reactive approaches, grounded in knowledge and intelligence, for confronting organized criminal drug entrepreneurs and enterprises. Shifting law enforcement orientations away from reactive to enhanced intelligence or knowledge-based approaches will improve current policymaking practices, resource mobilization and utilization, operational priorities, the human-technology mix, communication and coordination among stakeholders, and performance accountability.

### *Political will and support*

The second significant constraint on drug control is political complacency towards the criminal drug market. Political will and support are necessary for efficient efforts against illicit drug enterprises and the organized criminal groups behind them. Political will and support of tackling illicit drugs can be enhanced by:

- a. Enactment of appropriate laws and strengthening of agencies to enforce them.
- b. Development and implementation of policies emphasizing multi-sectorial and multi-disciplinary approaches with significant preventive and disruptive effects on illicit drug demand and supply.
- c. Resourcing agencies for efficient performance in curtailing illicit drug supply and demand.
- d. Exercising effective oversight of agencies involved in controlling illicit supply and demand of drugs.
- e. Implementing economic and social measures that will minimize incentives to involvement in illicit drug demand and abuse. This entails mainstreaming prevention and control of drugs into national development planning and strategies.
- f. Engaging and strengthening international cooperation to tackle transnational organized crimes, including drug trafficking.

In recent years, the political will of Nigerian government to address this critical threat seems to have waned. Unlike in the 1980s and 1990s (paradoxically, during military rule) tackling illicit drugs through policy, capacity building and resourcing agencies for enhanced performance has not been high on the political agenda. This is occurring under civilian rule and electoral democracy, and is exacerbated by organized crime groups infiltrating and exercising control in the realms of both politics and the economy.

Drug law enforcement officers were asked whether “combating organized crime is high on [the] government agenda” and whether the “fight against organized crime is high on [the] political agenda of present government.” Less than a fifth (18.4 per cent) reported that combating organized crime is high on the government agenda. However, more than three-quarters (76.0 per cent) responded that fighting organized crime is high on the political agenda of the present government. While these two differing responses appear contradictory, there is an explanation. Respondents understood “government agenda” as meaning issues the government prioritizes in terms of policy reviews, reforms, capacity building, and resourcing to enhance performance and achieve goals. However, “political agenda” was interpreted as political statements or rhetoric without the corresponding deployment of resources.

NDLEA has been underfunded in recent years, which underscores the view that political will to combat illicit drugs has dwindled. Over ten years (from 2008 to 2017), NDLEA made a budget request of 27,045,865,664 naira; however, the government appropriated 2,935,458,449 naira, and only released 1,549,580,746 naira.<sup>45</sup> There is virtually no conscious effort to develop capacity and provide requisite resources for drug research, education, treatment and rehabilitation in federal or state budgets. Nigeria is heavily reliant on UNODC and foreign government development agencies for capacity building, intelligence and technical assistance, and is not matching those resources, again indicating the low priority of curbing the country’s illicit drug market. This poses serious threats because it will enable Nigeria’s organized criminal groups to grow stronger, with dire political, economic and social consequences.

Laws and regulations on pharmaceutical drugs in Nigeria are inadequately enforced and that shortcoming poses serious concerns. Drugs, including controlled substances, are hawked in markets, motor parks and commercial buses. Many poor Nigerians in urban and rural areas are diagnosed at these spots and obtain prescriptions there, as do individuals who self-medicate. Patent medicine stores, which are licensed to sell over-the-counter drugs, pose another challenge because many operators are not qualified pharmacists and yet they sell prescription drugs. These stores may serve as outlets for diverted and controlled drugs. Both hawkers and patent medicine stores therefore pose serious challenges for curtailing the use and abuse of psychotropic substances. The majority of patients in treatment centres where NENDU surveys were conducted in 2015 and 2016 reported that they sourced their drugs from the streets.

Inefficient enforcement of drug laws is partially the result of overlapping mandates of the NDLEA, NAFDAC and Nigeria Customs Service, and the lack of coordination between agencies.

Another major constraint in the control of drug trafficking is the absence of a strategic developmental approach to tackling the economic, political, and social and health effects of the criminal market’s supply and demand dimensions. National development plans and even sectorial policies on economic development, security and human development rarely acknowledge the impact of illicit drugs. The government should be aware of the economic and socio-political factors that may enhance or inhibit the supply and demand of illicit drugs.

<sup>45</sup> P. 13 of memo sent to the government by the agency pleading for enhanced resources. On p. 12 of the memo to the government, the agency lamented: “In 10 years, NDLEA has got 1.5 billion naira as capital budget from the government. Average of 150 million per year (sic). In 2017 only 80 million naira was released to NDLEA for infrastructure development.”

Tackling illicit drugs requires macro-political and economic policy frameworks, not just a law enforcement approach.

Survey respondents recommended several measures for effective prevention and control of organized crime. Those suggestions included: collaboration among law enforcement agencies (23.8 per cent); adequate legislation (16.7 per cent); trans-border collaboration (14.3 per cent); reliable data and statistics (14.3 per cent); availability of money for research (11.9 per cent); provisions of adequate manpower (4.8 per cent); and appointment of competent people as head of anti-drug law agencies.

Measures recommended by respondents for the prevention and control of the illicit drug trade were: reduction of youth unemployment (39.1 per cent); public enlightenment (13.0 per cent); rehabilitation of offenders (13.0 per cent); intelligence-led policing (10.9 per cent); education of citizens (8.7 per cent); poverty alleviation (6.5 per cent); increased collaboration among law enforcement agencies (6.5 per cent); and trans-border collaboration (2.2 per cent).

In a validation workshop for the draft report of this threat assessment, conducted in October 2018, participants offered the following recommendations for improved prevention and control of supply and demand for illicit drugs:

1. Enhanced coordination of responses among drug law enforcement and regulatory agencies.
2. NAFDAC should develop capacity and mechanisms for early warning on availability and use of illicit drugs.
3. Establishment of a joint strategic intelligence unit as an organ of an inter-ministerial committee to coordinate intelligence and research and conduct threat assessments.
4. NDCMP's National Coordinating Unit should effectively strengthen and coordinate State Control Committees and develop annual action plans.
5. The data template in NDLEA and other drug law enforcement and regulatory agencies should be more comprehensive to enhance research, planning, management and operations.
6. Development of standard operation procedures for agencies operating at ports (air, land and sea).
7. The need for continuing research on the extent, patterns, trends and effects of poly-drug use.
8. Recognition of the nexus between drugs and violence; enforcement of cannabis controls should not escalate violence.
9. Adequate attention should be given to misuse of drugs and substances among security and law enforcement personnel.
10. Continuing research and analysis of operational data to identify threats posed by criminal drug markets and drug policies.
11. Recognition of the role and potential of civil society in drug abuse prevention and treatment. Enhanced coordination between government agencies and civil society organizations for drug misuse prevention, and treatment and rehabilitation of individuals involved drug abuse.
12. Enhanced resources and capacity building for the ministries of health, research and healthcare institutes at federal and state levels to promote drug demand prevention and reduction, as well as treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers.
13. Greater attention should be given to studies of the relationship between drug abuse and other healthcare concerns, including HIV/AIDs, and security issues like domestic violence and child abuse.

## Summing up the drug situation and threats in Nigeria

Despite enactment of laws, the establishment of drug enforcement and regulatory agencies, and international assistance, involvement of Nigerians in illicit the drug market persists and continues to elicit concern.<sup>46</sup> Analysis of information obtained from primary and secondary sources revealed:

1. Persistence of significant involvement of some Nigerian citizens in illicit drug enterprises at national and international levels.
2. Available statistics from NDLEA neither indicate a systematic reduction nor increase in trafficking of cocaine, heroin or cannabis.
3. Production of amphetamine-type stimulants, especially methamphetamine, now occurs in Nigeria. Fifteen clandestine laboratories were discovered from 2009 to 2018. While Nigerians controlled the laboratories, foreign experts were employed to produce the drug and train Nigerians in its production. Methamphetamine produced in Nigeria is trafficked abroad.
4. There has been an increase in the range of drugs involved in the illicit drug trade in Nigeria and emerging capacity for production and export of methamphetamines. Available statistics from surveys of drug users, drug enforcement agencies, drug treatment centres and the media indicate increasing trafficking and abuse of psychotropic substances, especially tramadol and codeine-laced syrup.
5. High production of cannabis is occurring in a growing number of states. Production and distribution of cannabis is organized and controlled by crime groups.
6. There is increased demand for, and use and misuse of, a variety of controlled drugs such as tramadol, codeine-laced syrup, psychotropic drugs and substances and mixture of various substances.
7. Countries in West Africa, where trafficking in drugs is a problem and capacity for its control is weak, surround Nigeria. Drugs are trafficked in and out of Nigeria through neighbouring countries. Drug trafficking occurs through Nigeria into other countries in Europe, Asia, North and South America and within Africa by foreign and Nigerian domestic criminal networks that operate on global scale.
8. Anecdotal information from arrests indicates the existence of clusters of actors in organized crime. Actors are loosely organized domestically and abroad, and include Nigerians who live abroad and their associates in Nigeria. These groups are particularly active in cocaine and heroin trafficking and distribution in the local market.
9. Despite the formulation and promotion of NDCMP (2015-2019), the integrated inter-agency approach to drug prevention and control remains very weak.
10. Law enforcement has focused on combating drug trafficking, while neglecting other approaches like drug demand reduction. Thus, even as a drug abuse epidemic plagues several Nigerian states, there is no robust national discussion about multi-disciplinary approaches that include harm reduction, available, accessible and affordable drug counselling, and treatment and rehabilitation. Facilities for counselling, treatment and rehabilitation are inadequate and inaccessible to those who require them, particularly in a majority of Nigerian communities where healthcare facilities are lacking.

<sup>46</sup> National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC).

## Threats associated with the current drug situation in Nigeria

Trafficking and abuse of illicit drugs have serious political, economic and social consequences. Literature and research on illicit drug supply and demand has shown that even sustained, appropriate and adequate efforts are often unable to curb illicit drugs, which pose threats to political stability and good governance, sustainable economic development, national security, community and personal safety, and social solidarity.

Given the current drug situation and constraints on the effective control of illicit drugs in Nigeria, enumerated in the previous section, there is no doubt that criminal drug markets and networks – as well as the growing abuse of drugs – constitute serious threats to good governance, security and development in Nigeria. Entrenched markets in illicit drugs in the country can have the following consequences:

- ▶ Distortion of economic management and efficiency through illicit flows of money, good and services.
- ▶ Undermining of democratic political governance and effective public decision-making due to corruption of public institutions and officials.
- ▶ Political and socioeconomic instability due to the weakening of government institutions, especially security, law enforcement and judicial agencies.
- ▶ Employing or encouraging violence to protect the supply of illicit drugs, with adverse consequences for security and development of individuals, communities, countries and the global community.

Demand for and abuse of illicit drugs and substances constitute serious threats to national and human development and security, especially in the following areas:

- ▶ Increases in the availability, consumption and users of illicit drugs.
- ▶ Health complications that diminish the wellbeing and productivity of individuals who abuse or misuse drugs, which hinders economic development.
- ▶ Diversion of resources for development into the provision of medical care for drug abusers, thereby reducing resources available for human development and welfare.
- ▶ Incidence and prevalence of violence associated with demand for illicit drugs. Three forms of crime are most commonly associated with demand for drugs: crimes associated with violation of laws regulating or controlling possession, distribution and use of drugs; involvement of drug abusers in crime to obtain money required to procure drugs; and crime committed under the influence of drugs.
- ▶ Constraints on the development and welfare of individuals involved in drugs due to drug-induced illness, dropping out of school, or poor academic or work performance.
- ▶ Abuse of drugs and substances affects family relationships and stability, and are triggers of domestic violence, child abuse, and economic and emotional stress for family members.
- ▶ Criminological literature shows that communities with high rates of drug use are often plagued by social disorganization.

Continuing involvement of Nigerians in criminal drug markets at national and international levels, and the growing abuse of drugs within the country pose serious threats to national and human development, and security.



## Recommendations

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The constraints identified above need to be addressed through the following measures:

1. The government should demonstrate stronger political will, support of reviews and enactment of appropriate laws. Also needed is the development and implementation of effective programmes, and the granting of mandates to agencies to address illicit drug demand and supply. This will require constant evaluation of laws, policies and measures, necessary resources, regular performance assessments, and oversight mechanisms.
2. The government should ensure coherence in laws and organizational mandates and, where there is uncertainty, clarify it in order to enhance efficient collaboration and coordination. Two separate lead agencies, each coordinating drug supply and drug demand in collaboration with each other, improves efficiency and is a best practice adopted by many countries around the world.
3. There is need to broaden policy measures for the control of illicit drugs by finding a balance between the range of approaches for preventing and controlling illicit drug supply and demand. Broader social, economic and health policy measures that minimize incentives and dispositions towards involvement in illicit drugs should be incorporated in development plans and government programmes at national, state and local levels. Priority should be given to research that produces knowledge to inform policies and programmes.
4. To ensure efficiency, the government should adopt an integrated approach, with intelligence and knowledge as the bedrock of policy, planning, management and operations.
5. The executive and legislative arms of government should cooperate to ensure that appropriate and adequate resources are provided to agencies responsible for implementing drug supply and demand reduction laws and programmes.
6. Agencies responsible for implementing measures or delivering services for the control of illicit drugs should have efficient human resources management that ensures an optimal mix of human technology resources. Those agencies should also continuously appraise organizational and personnel needs in terms of skills, incentives, discipline and professionalism. This may entail a review of current organograms, and a shift away from the paramilitary model of long chains of multi-layer hierarchical ranks within a command unit. This structure stifles innovation and efficiency in complex fields like the control of criminal markets, which are fluid and adapt quickly to law enforcement strategies.
7. More efficient mechanisms for the coordination and implementation of the National Drug Control Master Plan should be developed to strengthen partnerships, clarify responsibility and encourage accountability at all levels of government and between government and civil society organizations (research institutes, NGOs, faith and community-based organizations, the media and relevant professional associations).

Comprehensive multi-sectorial and multi-disciplinary approaches as well as effective coordination of approaches and international/multi-lateral cooperation are needed for effective control of criminal drug markets within and across countries. As UNODC aptly observed:

Fighting organized crime remains a precondition to the consolidation of peace, security and political stability. Ensuring that criminal actors are identified, investigated, prosecuted and sentenced is critical to strengthening the credibility of national institutions and governments to their people and to external actors. It is critical to address the problems of continuing corruption, which undermine good governance (UNODC 2013: 7).

An efficient legal system and democratic governance that expand socio-economic opportunities, ensure efficient service delivery and protect human rights and security are critical to the prevention and control organized crime, including its criminal drug market component.

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## 7. CONCLUSION

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Criminal drug markets have very serious negative impacts on individuals, communities, countries and humanity. Organized criminal groups with Nigerian origin have been involved in trafficking heroin, cocaine and psychotropic substances over the past three decades. Local production of potent psychotropic drugs and substances, including cannabis, has increased. A growing number of people, including women, are misusing drugs. While these problems worsen, political will and capacity for developing and implementing effective measures against illicit drug supply and demand are inadequate.

Criminal drug markets pose serious problems for human security and welfare as well as national security and development. Governments at the national, state and local levels need to develop measures that can efficiently control illicit drugs. Strong partnerships between governments, communities and groups are required to effectively confront the threats of criminal drug markets in Nigeria.

