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Afghanistan

Behind the opium tragedy

perspectives

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Afghan woman smokes heroin under her burka.

Photo: Alessandro Scotti



Photo: Alessandro Scotti

During the past few decades, the international community has made much progress in tackling the global drug problem. Coca cultivation has stabilized in the Andean region and the once infamous Golden Triangle—Laos, Myanmar and Thailand—is now practically opium-free.

But serious challenges remain. The most urgent is the recent boom in opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan, where approximately 90 per cent of the world's opium is currently produced. Through the arresting images of photojournalist and UNODC Goodwill Ambassador **Alessandro Scotti**, this issue of *Perspectives* aims to give readers a close look at different aspects of the opium trade. In an interview, UNODC Representative in Afghanistan **Christina Oguz** offers hope that the situation can and will improve.

In Afghanistan and elsewhere, the link between drugs, crime and terrorism is obvious. The drugs trade, a billion-dollar business, attracts criminal and terrorist groups which have the power to destroy lives and communities and to weaken States. Responding to this threat to peace and security requires concerted action based on the principle of shared responsibility. Drug producing, transit and consumer countries are all in it together.

The **Commission on Narcotic Drugs** is instrumental in defining common priorities and strategies to counter the global drug problem. As the central policy-making body within the United Nations system dealing with drug-related matters, the Commission analyses the world drug situation and develops proposals to strengthen the international drug control system. *Perspectives* presents a retrospective of the Commission's achievements after its fiftieth session in Vienna in March. We also examine the role which specialist laboratories, including UNODC's, play in drug control efforts.

Colombian musician **César López** has demonstrated that artists, musicians and ordinary citizens can help to fight violence. Tired of terrorism, crime and violence in his home country, López has created the *escopetarra*, a unique instrument of peace—a guitar made from an AK 47 assault rifle. You can read about his work with UNODC in Colombia, campaigning for an end to violence.

Get ready to listen to a different tune!

Norha Restrepo
Editor

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SCIENTIFIC SUPPORT

Laboratory science: More than just drug control

By Raggie Johansen

For more than 50 years, laboratory expertise has played a critical role in United Nations drug control efforts. The role of laboratories in modern society, however, is much broader than drug control. Although they impact on areas such as law enforcement, criminal justice and health care, their contribution is seldom recognized.

“Labs generally have low visibility,” says Barbara Remberg, acting Chief of the UNODC Laboratory and Scientific Section. “For example, if there’s a large drug seizure somewhere, law enforcement and customs officials get lots of recognition and publicity. But there was

a lab behind it to make sure that the seized material was indeed an illegal drug and not simply flour or sugar.”

The main purpose of the UNODC Laboratory and Scientific Section is to assist Member States in developing drug laboratory capacity and expertise, particularly at the national level. Its staff train scientists, run quality control programmes, develop internationally recognized analytical methods and guidelines and provide drug reference samples as well as laboratory equipment.

The recent session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the key United Nations policy-making organ on drug-related issues, recognized the importance of laboratory expertise and expressed concern over the differences in technical sophistication between Member States’ laboratory and scientific services. The Commission urged UNODC and countries with more advanced facilities to assist those with fewer resources.

A laboratory technician prepares a field test kit for preliminary identification of drugs. UNODC has distributed around 10,000 such kits worldwide



Having an up-to-date, properly equipped laboratory staffed by professionals takes a lot of resources. It is expensive to set up and maintain, and demands continuous investment in equipment, staff development and drug samples for training. As the results of this are usually not seen immediately, many resource-strapped countries prioritize other tasks.

However, as Remberg explains, lack of laboratory capacity can impact profoundly on a society. For example, if the police cannot identify drugs found on detainees, prosecutions become difficult. And if emergency room doctors, particularly in countries where many rely on poorly funded public hospitals, have no way of knowing which drug a patient has been abusing, they will have trouble giving proper treatment.

In his opening statement to the CND, Thomas Schweich, United States Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, asked: “How can we stay on top of regulating newly-created chemical substances?” And it is, indeed, a challenge to stay abreast of rapidly changing drugs in today’s global market.

Drug precursor chemicals also keep evolving. Sandeep Chawla, Chief of UNODC’s Policy Analysis and Research Branch, explains that precursors are readily available chemicals for use in a range of industries. At the same time, they are crucial for producing illicit

A laboratory technician prepares drug samples for analysis



The staff of the UNODC Laboratory and Scientific Section
All Photos: Melitta Borovansky-König

drugs. For example, potassium permanganate is used worldwide as a disinfectant and for water purification, among other purposes. However, it is also used illicitly to turn coca plant material into cocaine. Therefore, it is important to ensure that dozens of precursor chemicals do not end up in the hands of criminals.

High-quality drug analysis facilities and expertise form part of the answer to Schweich’s question, as legislators and policymakers depend on laboratories to provide them with accurate information on the production methods, precursor chemicals and composition of new drugs. Only through consistent investments in scientific capacity can countries ensure that national policy and legislation keep up with the rapid developments in illicit drug manufacturing.

Over the years, UNODC has assisted 175 laboratories in 120 countries, and trained almost 800 drug analysts. It also provides, for a nominal fee, drug and precursor field test kits for quick and simple preliminary identification by police officers. These kits can be tailored to the drug situation in the recipient’s region. Around 10,000 kits have been distributed so far.

UNODC’s quality assurance programme gives laboratories an opportunity to continually review their performance. Using their standard procedures, participating facilities analyse UNODC-provided drug and precursor samples, and send their results back to Vienna.

“Labs from all over the world participate in this scheme,” Remberg says. “Once we receive the results, we prepare a detailed report comparing their analytic findings, anonymously of course, so that the labs know where they stand.”

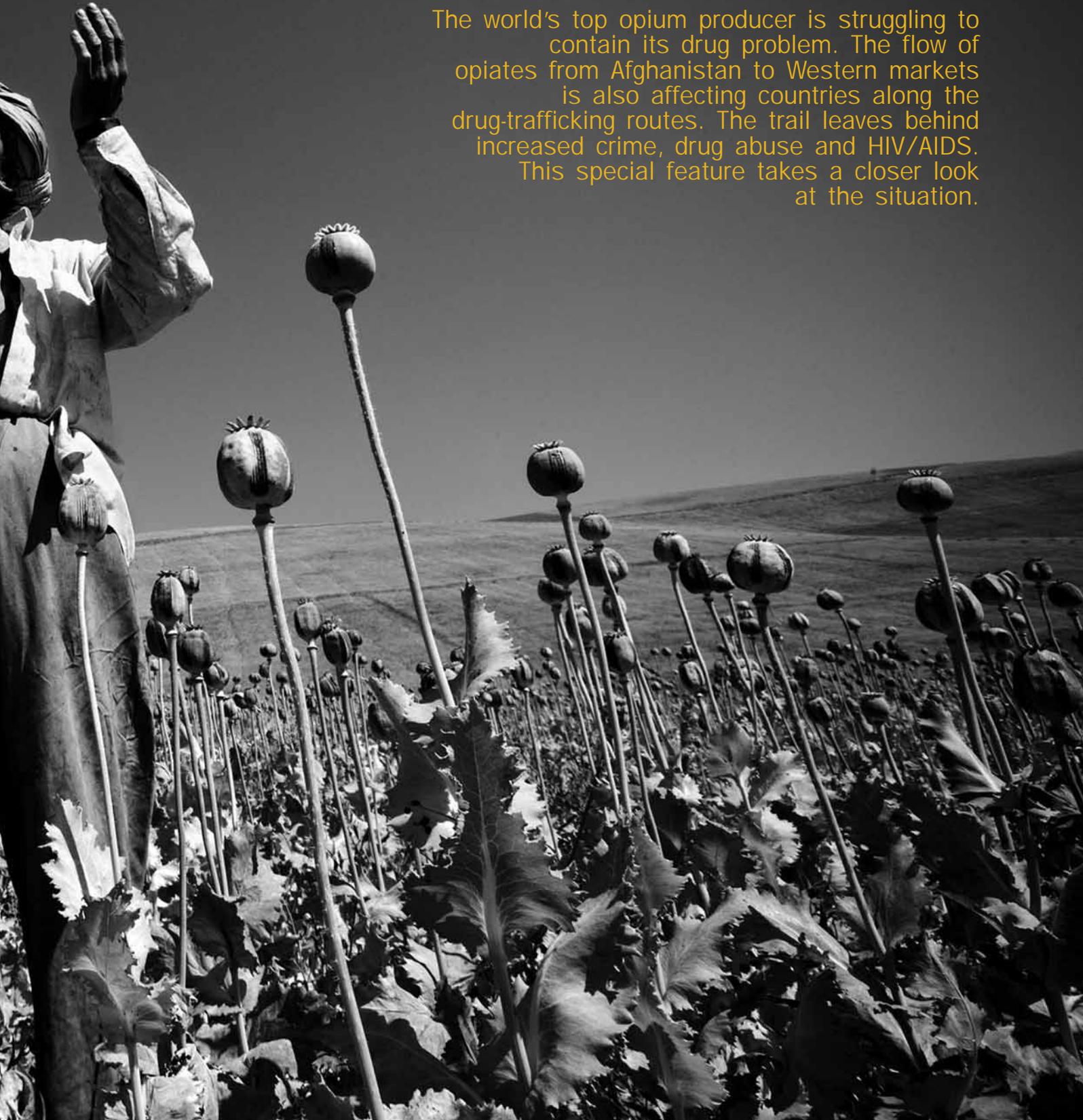
Having successfully provided drug analysis expertise for years, the UNODC Laboratory and Scientific Section is currently expanding its work by moving into forensics, aiming to assist Member States to use laboratory science in the fight against crime.



An opium farmer in north-east Afghanistan is thankful for the harvest. In 2006, cultivation in his province increased by 77 per cent.

Afghanistan

The world's top opium producer is struggling to contain its drug problem. The flow of opiates from Afghanistan to Western markets is also affecting countries along the drug-trafficking routes. The trail leaves behind increased crime, drug abuse and HIV/AIDS. This special feature takes a closer look at the situation.



Afghan soldiers prepare to walk for five days to the border with Tajikistan, where they will participate in counter-narcotics operations. The border between these countries is roughly 1,200 kilometers long.







Two addicts get ready to inject heroin. Most of the 10 million heroin abusers worldwide live in Asia, primarily in the countries around Afghanistan and Myanmar.

A patient lies in bed in the ward reserved for drug addicts at a psychiatric hospital in Kabul. About 200,000 people in the country abuse opiates.





An Afghan poppy farmer blows opium smoke into his hungry child's face to pacify him.

INTERVIEW

Christina Oguz: "To work in Afghanistan, you need to be an optimist."

By Louise Potterton



UNODC Representative in Afghanistan Christina Oguz talks about drugs and crime and life in a country devastated by opium, poverty and war.

What are the main reasons for the increase in opium cultivation?

The southern part of Afghanistan is a traditional opium cultivation area, where security is very poor, where the rule of law doesn't really exist and where the government is very weak. A map of opium cultivation and a map of security put on top of each other look almost the same. We should also remember that it is very profitable. Farmers can get about 10 times more per hectare if they cultivate opium compared to something else.

If opium poppy is so lucrative, how can you possibly encourage farmers to grow something else?

Afghanistan is more or less divided into two parts. In the south, about 80 per cent of the farmers cultivate opium. The rest of the country has a better security situation and village council campaigns informing farmers that it's actually against Islam to cultivate—that it's Haram. This has been a success in those parts of Afghanistan, but it has not been such a success in the south. In the south you have poor security, but you also have the social norm that it is OK to cultivate. So I think you need to look for two different solutions. My suggestion would be to invest in the provinces and districts that are opium-free. In this way, you can create a real alternative. But for the south you need another solution, which has to do with creating security, with extending the rule of law, with targeting the big traffickers.

I am quite optimistic about Afghanistan. Even though we have seen an increase last year and this year, we have to accept that there will be ups and downs. As

the international community, we have to realize that it is a long-term commitment. If we look at other countries that have been major producers of opium, it has taken them maybe 20–25 years to become opium-free.

What does the average Afghan think about the opium trade?

Some farmers in Afghanistan cultivate opium because they are poor. They don't have access to land, so they need credit. They can lease land on the condition that they also cultivate opium or they can get credit against the future harvest of opium. Then there are farmers who have a lot of other assets as well. They may have good irrigation, a lot of land, all sorts of assets. For them, it's simply that they make a very good profit. But it also brings with it a lot of insecurity.

When the opium is harvested, what actually happens to it? Is it processed into heroin? Is it exported?

Afghanistan produces more and more heroin. Before, they mainly produced opium and then sold it to Pakistan or Iran for manufacturing morphine and heroin. Now we see more and more heroin being produced within the country. In the south of Afghanistan, it's mainly what is called brown heroin. It's not as refined as the white powder that they are able to manufacture in the north, but it means that they have the technology and the chemicals needed for transforming opium into heroin. And this is crucial because these chemicals are not produced in Afghanistan; they come from other countries.

Opium can be cultivated legally in some countries; why not in Afghanistan? It's one of the poorest countries in the world. Surely it could benefit from this?

I don't believe in this idea at all—not as things are now. The main reason is that if a Government produces opium for legal purposes, it must be able to ensure that it is not diverted. With the situation in Afghanistan as it is now, this is totally impossible. The Government can never, ever make sure that opium is not diverted. It doesn't have these resources.

You come from Sweden, one of the most affluent countries in the world. How did you cope with the culture shock?

I don't think that the culture issues are the biggest or the most difficult part for us who come from outside. I think it's the fact that you can't lead a normal life. You



Opium poppy farmer



Drug seizures



Afghan border police activities

can't walk the streets, for example. There are very few places you can visit because it can be dangerous. I think you cope with it because there is no choice. In normal circumstances you would always compare your life to somebody else's and say 'I would like to have this' or 'I wish I had that'. There are no such things in Afghanistan.

How does UNODC work on drug control projects in a country with such a big drug problem?

Our task is to help the Afghan Government build its own capacity. We train the country's anti-narcotic police, judges, prosecutors and doctors. Perhaps

and no knowledge, no awareness, of the risks of dependence. So people treat themselves and become addicted.

What is UNODC doing in Afghanistan to help addicts?

We have built what we call demand reduction action teams in six provinces. But it's a drop in the ocean. So we have started to discuss with the Minister of Public Health the building up of the treatment system. We would like to help them build it into the primary health system. We would train the nurses and midwives to diagnose addiction, to see whether or not they can do something themselves, or whether they need to refer patients to a doctor. By building it into the primary

“ We are walking in the right direction. I can see that we have actually been able to help our colleagues in Afghanistan: the judges, prosecutors, policemen, nurses and doctors who work with these issues.

UNODC is better known for the opium surveys, where we estimate the cultivation, the hectares and also the yield. Originally, this was done by international experts, but we have now trained the Afghans to do it themselves. And I expect that in one or two years we'll just review the reports.

We hear a lot about Afghanistan exporting opium and producing heroin, but what about drug addiction?

Afghanistan has a sizeable drug abuse problem, but it is a bit difficult to estimate. Opium addiction is mainly a rural problem, and it has very much to do with the lack of health facilities. People in remote areas—where there are no doctors, no medicines—resort to whatever they have. And they sometimes use it for their children. The parents will smoke opium and then blow the smoke into the mouth of the baby to pacify it. Then they get addicted to it. Heroin addiction is most widely spread among males in the cities. Very often they become addicted as refugees in Iran or Pakistan. And the third problem is a mixture of total lack of control of pharmaceutical drugs

health care system, you can have less expensive interventions and save the more expensive ones for the heroin addicts.

You've only been based in Afghanistan for a few months, but you obviously know a lot about the country. Do you feel that UNODC is improving the situation?

To work in Afghanistan, you need to be an optimist. You also need to be a pragmatic and realistic person because the success stories are not big in Afghanistan. We are walking in the right direction. I can see that we have actually been able to help our colleagues in Afghanistan: the judges, prosecutors, policemen, nurses and doctors who work with these issues. Not many yet, but every change starts with a very little step in the right direction.

Louise Potterton is UNODC's radio consultant.

Listen to this and other radio interviews at www.unodc.org/multimedia_radio.html.

AFGHANISTAN AT THE SECURITY COUNCIL

UNODC chief calls for action against drug cartels

Corruption must be stamped out and borders strengthened to run emerging Afghan drug cartels out of business, particularly in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, UNODC Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa told reporters at UN Headquarters in March.

“Most of the Afghan opium is exported either to Iran or Pakistan,” Mr. Costa said, calling for strengthened relations among the three countries to stem illicit drug trafficking.

Mr. Costa, who briefed the Security Council on UNODC’s latest report on opium cultivation in Afghanistan, called corruption the “major lubricant” facilitating both the cultivation and trading of opium.

He welcomed a new Council initiative—under which major traffickers could have their assets seized, be banned from travel and face arrest—to prevent burgeoning cartels from becoming worldwide entities. “We count on that as a very important step to nip the emerging drug cartels in the bud,” he added.

He also called for greater efforts to promote development in Afghanistan to present farmers currently engaged in opium production with an alternative.

The Security Council meets to review the situation in Afghanistan. UN Photo/Ryan Brown



UNODC Executive Director Costa briefs the media at UN Headquarters. UN Photo/Devra Berkowitz

The UNODC *Afghanistan Opium Winter Assessment* highlighted the divergent regional trends between the centre-north and the south of the country.

While six of the centre-north provinces have been certified as drug-free, “the situation is out of control in the southern part of the country,” Mr. Costa said.

The expansive southern region, roughly half the size of France, has 100,000 hectares of land under illicit drug cultivation and currently has the largest concentration of narcotics in the world, he said.

The Security Council and Afghanistan

In a resolution adopted unanimously on 23 March, the Security Council urged the Afghan Government and the international community to do more to implement the Afghanistan Compact, a five-year UN-backed blueprint launched early last year which sets benchmarks for certain security, governance and development goals.

The resolution stresses the importance of meeting the benchmarks, particularly those focused on “the cross-cutting issue of counter-narcotics,” and calls for accelerated reform in the justice sector.

The resolution called on the Government to implement all the elements of its National Drug Control Strategy, including garnering regional support against illicit trafficking and money-laundering linked to the industry.

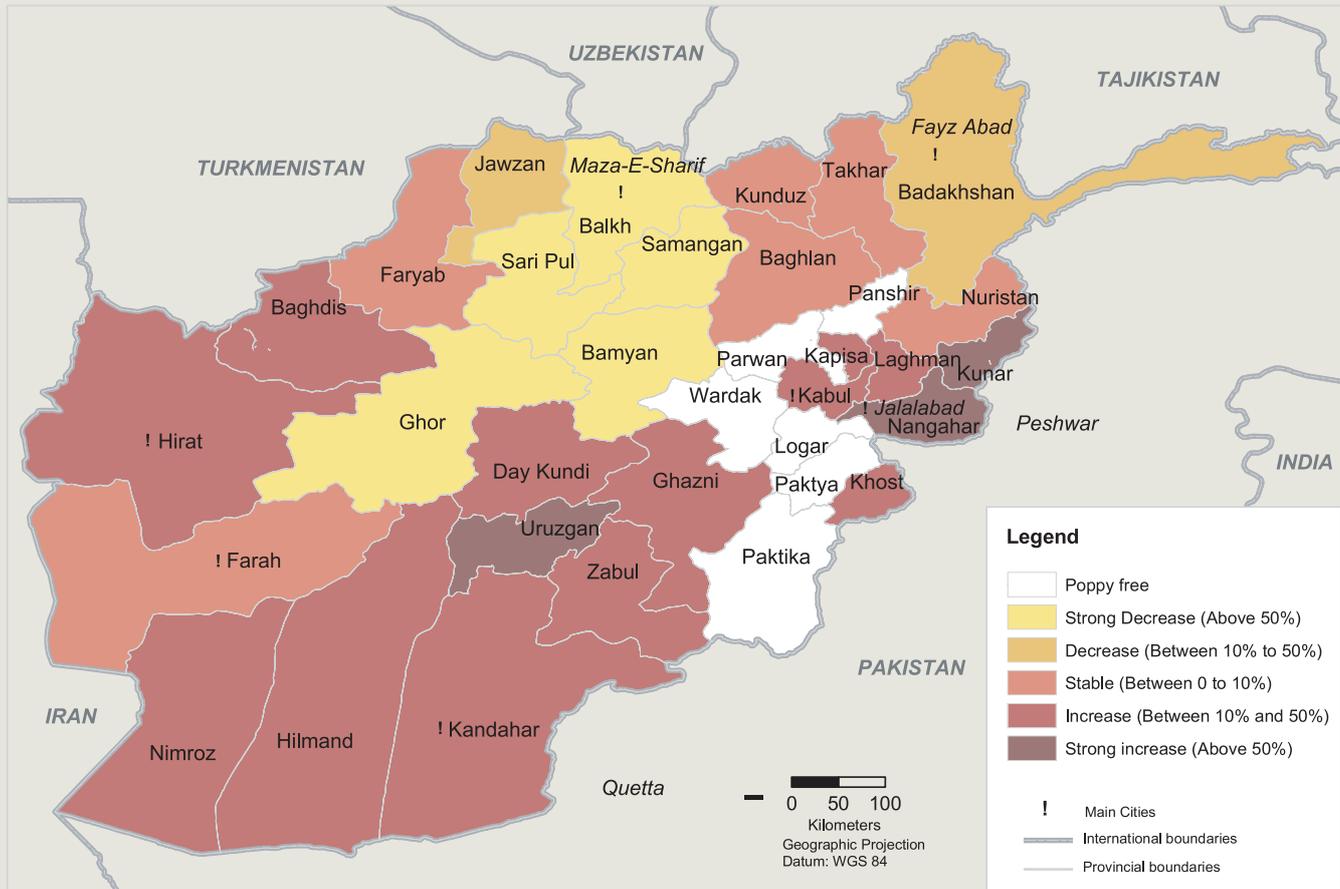
Source: United Nations News Centre



OPIUM POPPY CULTIVATION

FACTS

Afghanistan Opium Rapid Assessment Survey, 2007: Expected opium poppy cultivation trends (by province)



Source: MCN - UNODC Afghanistan Opium Rapid Assessment Survey, 2007 (www.unodc.org/crop_monitoring.html)

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Reasons for non-cultivation of opium poppy in 2007

Reasons	Percentage
Believed to be against Islam	24%
Respect for decisions taken by village elders or Shura	20%
Observance of poppy cultivation ban	18%
Fear of eradication	16%
Fear of other forms of law enforcement (e.g. imprisonment)	9%
Provision of assistance	3%
Lack of water	2%
Low sale price of opium	2%
Low demand for opium	1%
High cost of inputs (seed, fertilizers, labour, etc)	1%
Unfavourable weather	1%
Lack of experience	1%
Not traditional	1%
Fear of addiction	1%

The number of responses received for each of the above reasons was consistent with those given in 2006 (Afghanistan Annual Opium Survey 2006 Report, UNODC)



For more information on Afghanistan, please visit:
www.unodc.org/afg
www.paris-pact.net
www.denarcotics.info

Escopetarra

Musician César López works with UNODC to raise awareness about violence and firearms. Photo: Nación Sana



Instrument of peace

By Norha Restrepo

The instrument that Colombian musician César López plays at anti-violence events comes from the former German Democratic Republic. Dropped from an airplane as part of a consignment of weapons smuggled to leftist guerrillas hiding in the Colombian jungle, it later fell into the hands of right-wing paramilitaries.

Both illegal armed groups used the AK-47 as an instrument of war. López transformed it into an instrument of peace.

He came up with the idea to convert a weapon into a guitar after witnessing the aftermath of a bloody terrorist attack in February 2003. In the attack, attributed to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), a car bomb at an exclusive club in Bogota killed 36 people and injured 170.

López and his friends reacted to the violence in the only way they knew how: they played music. As peace activists and artists, they wanted to show their support for the victims and call for an end to the bloodshed. While performing close to the ruined club, López noticed that a soldier held his rifle in the same way he held his guitar. The first *escopetarra* was produced a few months later.

The rifles are provided by the Colombian authorities. Once the firing components are removed, luthier Alberto Paredes—an expert in making guitars—adds the pieces that forever change the object of death into one of hope—an electric guitar.

In Spanish, the word for shotgun is *escopeta* and the word for guitar is *guitarra*. Together, they become a powerful symbol of peace. For César López, the *escopetarra* represents the union between humanity's ugliest invention and one of the most beautiful. He created the instrument to

encourage people to think about what the country is going through and what they can do to change this collective reality.

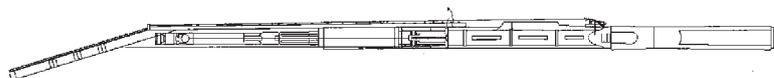
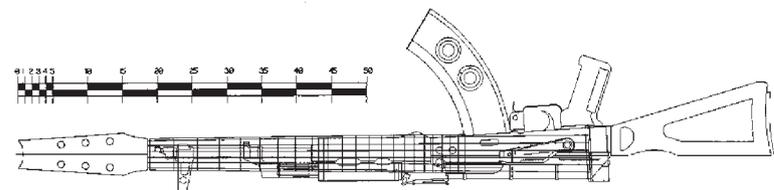
The *escopetarras* are made with rifles that often bear chilling marks listing the number of people they have killed. Initially, López worked with shotguns previously owned by guerrillas, paramilitary groups and organized criminals. Now, he uses assault rifles that paramilitary fight-

ers turned in when they demobilized.

"The fact that a weapon is transformed in such a radical way speaks of the possibility the whole planet has to change, even if it seems absurd," López told *Perspectives* in an online interview from his home in Bogota.

The instruments are given to prominent musicians to help them bring attention to the cause of end-

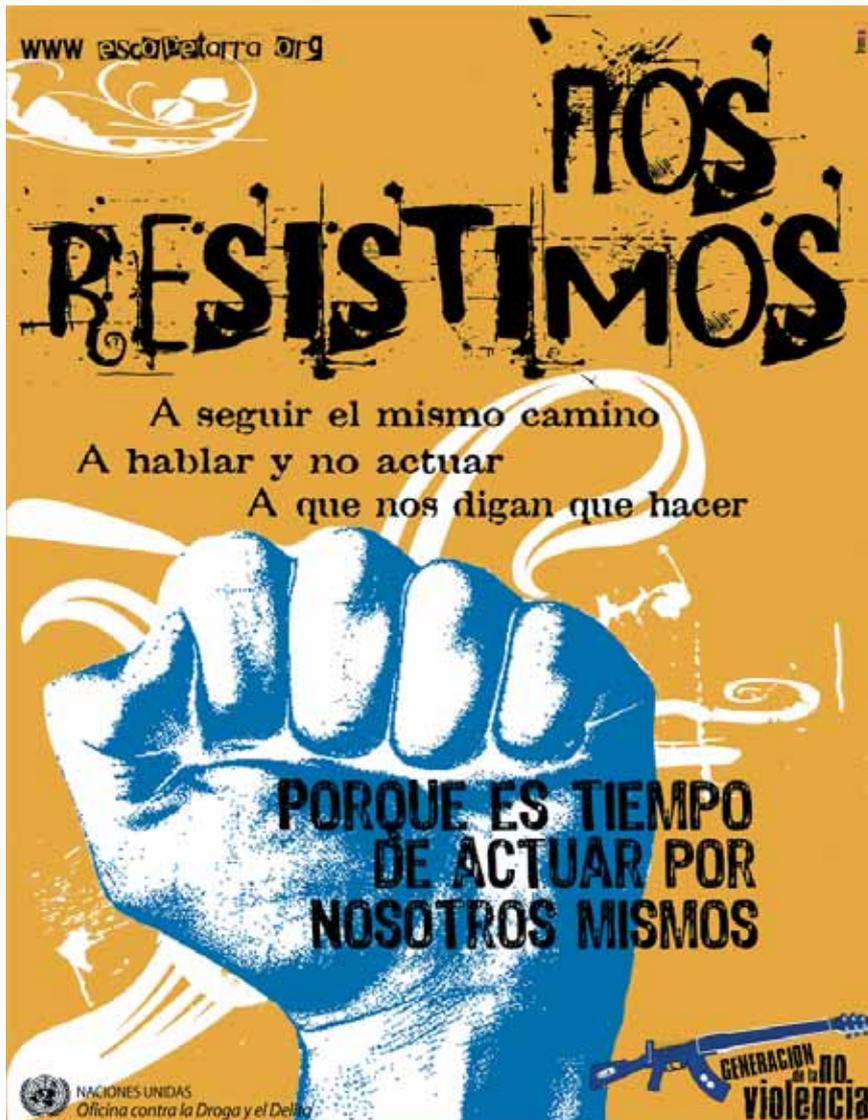
Based on the design below, rifles are transformed into electric guitars at a renowned luthier's workshop. Photo: UNODC Colombia



ESCOPETARRA SOBRE FUSIL AK 47

PROYECTO NACIONES UNIDAS
IDEA ORIGINAL CESAR LOPEZ
DISEÑO ALBERTO PAREDES R.
WWW.ALBERTOPAREDES.COM

JUNIO DE 2006



The *escopetarra* campaign calls on citizens to denounce violence.

musicians Manu Chao (France), Miguel Botafogo (Argentina) and Bob Geldof (Ireland).

Since 2006, López has been working with UNODC on a 'No Violence' campaign. Through the Office, César has received the funds and the 17 assault rifles needed to continue producing *escopetarras*.

"These weapons that have caused so much pain, harm and death, will be resurrected as instruments of love, life and creativity," said Colombian Vice-President Francisco Santos Calderón.

Disarming souls

César López, 33, started playing music at the age of 12. As the years went by, music became his profession and a way of life. "I'm a musician because I cannot do anything else in life," he writes.

Over the years, he has studied piano, percussion and composition. He has also been a member of rock bands and chamber music groups. With fellow musicians, López has recorded 10 albums.

In his blog, López writes that he has never "lost the appetite, the curiosity or the faith" to keep doing what he does. Although he still feels happy to play, compose, record and give concerts, he believes an artist's responsibility goes beyond merely providing entertainment. That is why he has been developing creative projects aimed at giving ex-combatants, young people caught up in violence and victims a chance to share their stories.

As part of the 'No Violence' campaign, López and other musicians have travelled to communities afflicted by violence to collect testimonials on video that are now shown at interactive concerts entitled *Resistance*. While an orchestra plays classical and electronic music

ing violence and curbing the spread of small arms and light weapons.

Artists are the perfect recipients of such a symbolic instrument, López says. "They are the active conscience of a culture and the most powerful tool to transform the vision and stand of human beings."

Artists with a cause

Each *escopetarra* is donated to an international artist, an institution or an individual working for peace.

Colombian superstar Juanes was the first musician to receive the instrument. Juanes, a Grammy Award winner, is famous worldwide for hits such as "La camisa negra"

and "A Dios le pido". In his albums, he talks about the injustice of war, the fear of violence and his dream to live in peace.

When he saw the *escopetarra*, Juanes could not believe his eyes or his ears, for the instrument looked like a rifle but sounded like a guitar. "It's a very powerful symbol," he said at a press conference in 2003. "I wish all weapons in Colombia and the world were like this one."

Argentinian musician Fito Páez was presented with a rifle-guitar in 2004.

An *escopetarra* was donated to the United Nations permanent exhibition on disarmament in New York and to the United Nations Office at Vienna. Other recipients to date include

Musician and activist Bob Geldof (right) examines the *escopetarra* he received in Cartagena, Colombia. Photo: UNODC Colombia

with instruments such as the *escopetarra*, stories shown on screen focus on peaceful resistance to violence. The audience is encouraged to participate.

The campaigners have also played in prisons, schools and universities. UNODC supports their work with young people, particularly with those linked to conflict and gangs. “Music and art show them that there are alternatives to violence,” says UNODC Associate Expert Stefan Liller, who has participated in several events.

López says his meetings with many young men who belonged to armed groups or street gangs have had a profound effect on him. “Most of them have deep scars in their skin and soul,” he says. “They need to go through a difficult process to stop being firearms themselves.”

This is where the *escopetarra* can help. Seeing a weapon transformed into a musical instrument can give hope to those who have only known violence that change is possible.

Some of the young men López met are now members of his Experimental Group of Recon-



ciliation, a hip-hop band. Two were in the ranks of the FARC, one joined the paramilitaries, and another was in a street gang. Their band and the music they create give them an opportunity to heal by sharing their feelings.

Most of the gun-related violence in Colombia and around the world is committed by young men.

According to López, “guns have an inevitable glamour that we have learned from movies such as Rambo and Mortal Combat.” That does not stop him from trying to strip guns of their power to destroy lives.

To learn more, visit www.cesarlopez.org and www.escopetarra.org.



UP IN ARMS

FACTS

Colombia's armed conflict has raged for over four decades, causing thousands of civilian casualties and the displacement of more than 2 million people. Leftist guerrillas are fighting the Government and right-wing paramilitaries are fighting the guerrillas. The civilian population, particularly in rural areas, are caught in the line of fire.

Organized crime also fuels violence. Colombia is the world's top producer of coca and cocaine, an illegal business that is worth billions of dollars. According to the Government, drug money is a significant source of financing for armed groups in the country. Moreover, drug traffickers are also involved in arms trafficking, money-laundering, extortion and other crimes. Since the drug cartels were

dismantled in the 1990s, traffickers have been working more closely with international terrorist and criminal networks.

A recent UNODC report entitled *Violence, Crime and Illegal Arms Trafficking in Colombia* found that violence was not indiscriminate but highly selective. As Sandro Calvani, UNODC Representative in Colombia, noted, “The idea of a culture of violence can then be discarded.”

UNODC is custodian of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three protocols, including the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition.

UNODC launches Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, together with other United Nations agencies, Governments, and NGOs, launched the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT) in London on 26 March.

The launch coincided with both the two hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the bicentennial of the abolition of the slave trade in the British Empire.

The Global Initiative is designed to motivate Governments, inspire international institutions, empower civil society, strengthen corporate responsibility, build regional alliances, galvanize international media support and mobilize resources to prevent and fight the crime of human trafficking.

A series of events throughout the world will culminate in Vienna with an International Conference against Human Trafficking from 27 - 29 November 2007.

A global problem

Some 2.5 million people throughout the world are at any given time recruited, entrapped, transported and exploited—a process called human trafficking—according to estimates of international experts. Many believe this number represents the tip of a much greater iceberg.

Trafficking in persons, whether for sexual exploitation or forced labour, affects virtually every region of the world. UNODC reports that persons from 127 countries become exploited in 137 nations.



Brothel in Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Photo: Mattia Insolera

“Slavery is a booming international trade, less obvious than two hundred years ago for sure, but all around us,” said UNODC Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa. “Perhaps we simply prefer to close our eyes to it, as many law-abiding citizens buy the products and the services produced on the cheap by slaves.”

Human trafficking has become big business. The United Nations and other experts estimate the total market value of illicit human trafficking at \$32 billion—about \$10 billion is derived from the initial “sale” of individuals, with the remainder representing the estimated profits from the activities or goods produced by the victims of this barbaric crime.

Most victims of this modern-day slavery are women and young girls, many of whom are forced into prostitution or otherwise exploited sexually. Trafficked men are found in fields, mines and quarries, or in other dirty and dangerous working conditions. Boys and girls are trafficked into conditions of child labour, within a diverse group of

industries, such as textiles, fishing or agriculture.

A 2006 UNODC report called “*Trafficking in Persons: Global Patterns*” identifies Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, China, Moldova, Nigeria, Thailand and Ukraine among the countries that are the greatest sources of trafficked persons. Belgium, Germany, Israel, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Thailand, Turkey and the United States are cited as the most common destinations.

Goal is to End Human Trafficking

The ultimate goal of the Global Initiative is to end human trafficking. The strategy for achieving this starts with efforts to increase public awareness of the problem. The initiative aims to harness and synergize these efforts, get others to join them, and set in motion a broad-based global movement that will attract the political will and resources needed to stop human trafficking. UNODC is the facilitator of the process, channelling existing efforts into a cohesive framework rather than re-inventing the wheel.

“The international community has been discussing this issue for ten years, so we have an idea what should be done,” Mr. Costa said.

“We have to decrease the number of victims by preventing trafficking, we have to increase the number of victims who are rescued and supported, and we have to increase the number of traffickers who are convicted. We have the tools to do this but we do not have the political will, large-scale public awareness or the resources to make it happen.”

For more information on human trafficking and the Global Initiative, please visit http://www.unodc.org/trafficking_human_beings.html

Japanese students support UNODC by raising money for drug control

Japanese students renewed their support for UNODC drug control efforts by making a donation of around \$170,000. Continuing a 13-year tradition, six young people presented the money to Deputy Director-General, UNOV, Franz Baumann.

The “Young Civic Ambassadors” aged 14 to 17 represent the Tokyo-based Drug Abuse Prevention Center (DAPC), which has raised more than \$4 million for UNODC in recent years.

This year’s young ambassadors were Saki Fujita, Junko Mizuki, Masataka Mizunashi, Yuma Tasaki, Mei Wakabayashi and Rie Watanabe. The Director of DAPC, Shunzo Abe, accompanied them during their visit to the Vienna International Centre.

Since 1994, DAPC has been raising funds for anti-drug efforts. Every year six to eight of the most active participants are nominated Young Civic Ambassadors and invited to Vienna to present their contribution to UNODC. DAPC plans to continue this fund-raising campaign in support of the goals set by the 1998 UN General Assembly Special Session on the world drug problem.

“Effective drug control goes beyond States. It must involve civil society, especially young people, in the



The DAPC delegation meets with Mr. Baumann at UNODC Headquarters in Vienna. Photo: Jun Yoshino

fight,” said Mr. Baumann. “This is exactly the direction we want to go.”

The DAPC has raised money to provide more than 400 grants to NGOs in some 90 developing countries. “Your money—equal to the contribution of some major donor countries—helps us to support other NGOs and create a multiplier effect,” said Mr. Baumann.

Global congress tackles financial and Internet fraud

The growth in Internet use has unleashed a new breed of cyberspace criminals. Financial and high-tech crimes, such as currency counterfeiting, money-laundering, intellectual property crime, payment card fraud, computer virus attacks and cyber-terrorism, are on the rise.

The Global Financial Crime Congress, organized by Interpol and UNODC, took place from 17-20 April 2007 in Bangkok, Thailand. It focused on the latest developments, technologies and strategies used to combat financial crime and to enhance cooperation among law enforcement authorities and the private sector.

“National economies everywhere, and certainly in the developing world, suffer damage caused by

the infiltration of criminal proceeds, including the ill-gotten gains from corruption and those funds destined for use in terrorist activities,” said UNODC Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa in a message to the Congress.

“Tracing, seizing and confiscating these funds is of the highest priority in order to cut off the lifeblood of the underlying crime, and to plough those assets back into much-needed development.”

Currency counterfeiting and money-laundering have the potential to destabilize national economies and threaten global security as they are key ways in which terrorists and other criminals finance their activities and conceal their profits.

At the Congress, experts from

law enforcement, customs, academia, private industry and multilateral organizations learned about training initiatives by UNODC targeting different areas of financial crime. Participants were also briefed on Interpol’s *Money-Laundering Automated Search System*, its latest money-laundering/terrorism financing initiative.

New technologies have opened up many possibilities for cyber-criminals, for example ‘phishing’, or sending bogus e-mail from seemingly reputable sources such as banks to persuade people to reveal account numbers, PIN codes and credit card details. Interpol is working with software companies, Internet service providers, central banks and other bodies to thwart criminals and protect consumers.



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