

## **Statement**

Mr. Sherhon Salimzoda, Director of the Drug Control Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Lieutenant General of Justice, at Regular Session of the United Nations Commission on Drugs and Crime (Vienna, March 2-6, 2020)

**Dear Mr. Chairman!**

**Ladies and Gentlemen!**

**Dear friends!**

Саломупаёмисамимйвагармучушони худро ба Шумо аз сарзамини зебоманзару офтобруя, - Тоҷикистон мерасонам.  
It is in my native language.

I translate: Cordial and warm greetings to all of you from a sunny and beautiful land - Tajikistan.

Tajikistan is still at the forefront of the combat against illicit trafficking of opium family drugs through the Northern Route. We physically have a border with our Afghan brothers for about 1344 kilometers. The drug situation in Tajikistan is completely dependent on its state in our neighboring country.

At the instruction of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Leader of the Nation, His Excellency Emomali Rakhmon, all law enforcement and security agencies, and the Tajik society in general as whole are taking all the necessary measures to establish a robust barrier to smuggling of Afghan drugs and inflow of new synthetic and psychotropic substances.

Thus, implementation of the National Counter-Narcotics Strategy and State Programs in this area allowed us achieving some certain results in the fight against drug trafficking.

According to our data, only 8-10 percent of drugs are exported through the so-called northern route, the remaining 80-90 percent is shipped via other routes. This fact on its own can indicate that drug control in the Northern Route countries, in particular, in Tajikistan, has got more strengthened.

Or, within the past 3-4 years, overall seizure of Afghan made drugs in consumer countries, as well as in the Central Asian countries, where they enter via the Northern Route, has decreased by 5-6 times; overall number of detentions of our citizens for illicit drug trafficking in foreign countries, including the Russian Federation, has 2.5-fold declined and seizure of drugs has dropped by 7-8 times.

With the exception of one fact documented in Kazakhstan in 2019, over the past 3 years in foreign countries, there is not a single fact of drug smuggling by Tajikistan air, rail and road transport facilities. Whereas 5–6 years ago in the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and other countries, 10–15 such cases were yearly disclosed and drugs were seized on a particularly large scale up to several hundred kilograms.

The following facts can also testify to the tightening of drug control in Tajikistan:

1. Most of drugs (50-60 percent) that are smuggled into Tajikistan are seized on the border or in border regions. We will not allow their entry into the country and further trafficking to other states;

2. The measures taken helped reduce the smuggling of drugs into the country, as evidenced by a triple increase in their prices. So, if in Dushanbe city one kilogram of opium used to cost \$500, its current price is \$1,500;

3. Every year, Tajikistan competent authorities disclose about 500 -1000 drug-related crimes and seize from 3 to 5 tons of drugs.

In 2019, we disclosed 582 crimes and seized 1,637 kilograms of drugs, of which 172 kilograms are heroin. Perpetrators were arraigned on a criminal charge.

In recent years, overall seizure of drugs has tended to reduce nationwide. For example, in 2019, Tajikistan law enforcement and security agencies seized 1,637 kg of narcotic drugs, which is 2.2 times or 29% less than in 2018. A similar decrease in overall seizures of opiates can be also seen in the Central Asian countries and in the Russian Federation, i.e. in the Northern Route countries located upturn Tajikistan.

4. In Tajikistan, there is a decrease in drug abuse of among the local population. So, over the past two years, overall number of drug addicts has dropped from 6,947 to 5,375 (by 1572 people or by 23%);

The factors contributing to reduction of drug seizures and drug-related offenses are as follows:

1. In connection with world events, we have reinforced and strengthened the state border control;

2. We, law enforcement agencies, temporarily until the situation normalized, suspended on the state border line such operations as control purchase and controlled deliveries;
3. Internal control over legal trade of narcotic drugs has been tightened;
4. The efficiency and effectiveness of the operational-search activities of Tajikistan law enforcement and security agencies have increased;
5. Over the course of three years, 32 organized transnational criminal groups were disclosed and dismantled, and more than 100 of their leaders and active members were arrested and prosecuted;
6. Improved international and regional cooperation and joint operations with law enforcement agencies of foreign countries. For example, in 2019, we conducted 3 joint operations with law enforcement agencies of the Russian Federation and Afghanistan, seized 61 kg of heroin from illicit trafficking, and due to joint efforts 33 members of organized crime groups were detained and prosecuted in the Russian Federation. In January 2020, in Dushanbe, our officers, in collaboration with the Regional Office representatives of the U.S. Department of Justice's Drug Enforcement Administration (INL), seized 44 kg

of opium, detained and arrested 3 people, two Tajik nationals and one citizen of the IRA.

7. For several consecutive years, at the initiative of the President of the country, high-level international conferences have been held in Dushanbe. One of such high-level conferences on “International and Regional Cooperation on Countering Terrorism and its Financing through Illicit Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime” took place in May 2019 and was attended by representatives of 52 states and 29 international and regional organizations, such as the UN, OSCE, European Union, Council of Europe, SCO, CIS, CSTO and others.

The conference delegates adopted a resolution and called these annual forums the “Dushanbe process” on countering terrorism and its financing.

The President of Tajikistan, Leader of the Nation, His Excellency Emomali Rahmon, took part in this conference and delivered the initiative “On the creation of a Special International Working Group of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime with the view of conducting a study to estimate the actual amount of narcotic drugs smuggled through the Northern Route countries.”

Using this rostrum, we ask you to support this initiative of our President. With this respect, it will increase the accountability of the Northern Route countries, and also the countries located along other routes.

**Dear participants of the session,**

In recent years the most troubling issue in our country is smuggling and spread of new synthetic drugs and psychotropic substances to the population and, in particular, to young people. Five years ago, delivery of synthetic drugs and psychotropic substances was of a singular nature, and now it has become permanent and systemic as 10-15,000 MDMA tablets and other new substances are yearly seized from illicit trafficking. So, 7, 555 MDMA tablets were seized in 2019 vs. 15, 880 in 2018. Moreover, new approaches of their selling have already appeared: through online stores, without hand-to-hand transfer by putting drugs in caches and paying their cost via the Internet. The drugs come to us mainly from Europe, as well as from Afghanistan over the last two years.

We ask you to identify countries producing new synthetic drugs and psychotropic substances and increase their responsibility with this respect.

**Dear friends,**

In the end, I want to assure you that neither traditional nor new narcotic substances are grown and produced in Tajikistan.

We are at the forefront of the combat against illicit trafficking in opium drugs. We will continue to intensify and tighten the fight against this evil and put more robust barrier on the path of smuggling of opiates and thereby we will contribute to protecting humanity from this negative phenomenon.

Thus, we ourselves set the following tasks:

1. Put tight control on the path of trafficking in the opium family drugs by taking actual and effective measures and thereby reduce and further fully stop their inflow into the country and then to other states;
2. To apply wider and more effectively the latest scientific and technical methodologies and techniques in preventing and combating importation of new synthetic drugs and psychotropic substances and in this way to prevent their entry into the country and spread to the population and, especially, to young people

We are confident that only together and in close cooperation we can confront the drug threat. I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the partner countries and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime for their continued support in the fight against illicit drug trafficking in our country.

Thank you for attention!

**Sherkhon Salimzoda**

**Director of the Drug Control Agency  
under the President of the Republic  
of Tajikistan, Lieutenant-General of Justice**