

SUMMARY

ILLICIT SUBSTANCE TRAFFICKING AS A TRIGGER FOR OTHER CRIMINAL MARKETS

The drug phenomenon is one of the most complex problems in the national and international context. Historically, North America has shown high levels of drug consumption and, geopolitically, Mexico represents the main entry point for the flow of some drugs (production in the South - consumption in the North). As a result, Mexican criminal groups have evolved in response to the North American consumption market, beginning to cultivate marijuana, transport cocaine and heroin of mainly Colombian origin to the United States of America (USA). They later generated their own heroin production and expanded their cocaine trade routes to South America, then incorporated synthetic drugs mainly from Asia, then began to generate their own synthetic drugs (particularly methamphetamine), and now continue to evolve by incorporating new drugs and expanding their areas of national and international dominance.

In the current six-year presidential period, the drug most seized in Mexico is **marijuana**, followed by **methamphetamine**, **cocaine**, **fentanyl** and **heroin**. The largest proportions of seizures were concentrated in the **Northwest Region**, specifically in **Baja California**, **Sonora** and **Sinaloa**, in response to the natural flow of supply and demand.

Generally in Mexico, it has been detected that the main mode of illicit drug trafficking is by land, followed by sea and air.

The main mode of traffic is by land, because the two main drugs seized in Mexico are marijuana and methamphetamine, which are not only trafficked, but also produced and consumed in national territory, therefore the main routes are internal land routes and respond basically to the demand of the North American market and domestic consumption.

On the other hand, the maritime modality responds mainly to two routes, one through the Gulf of Mexico and the other through the Pacific Ocean, primarily for the illicit trafficking of cocaine from Andean producing countries, destined for North America. It has also been observed that precursor chemicals from China and India enter the country through various ports on the Pacific coast.

Finally, the aerial modality is essentially used for the flow of cocaine from Andean countries to North America; aircrafts from Colombia and Venezuela have been detected, mainly destined for Quintana Roo and Chiapas.

The criminal market of drug trade is directly linked to different criminal expressions, due to its transnational nature and its usual multifaceted component (production chain: trafficking, sales, consumption of drugs).

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That said, to calculate the relationship of the illicit drug market with other illicit expressions, a mixed methodology (quantitative and qualitative) was used, which averages whether the correlation is high, medium or low based on the following:

With **quantitative** information from the databases of this National Center, the "Pearson" correlation coefficient was calculated to measure the strength of the relationship between markets (seizures of precursor chemicals, essential chemicals, weapons, currencies, wildlife, fuel, etc., **where drugs were also seized**) in the period from December 1, 2018 to September 21, 2021 in Mexico.

As well, **qualitative** information of the relationship that exists between the criminal expressions with variables of the criminal drug market such as the relationship with the chain of: 1) **production**; 2) **trafficking** and 3) **sales**. If there is a relationship with one variable, a percentage of 33% is considered; if there is a relationship with two variables, 66%; and if it is related to all three variables, a relationship of 100% is considered; finally, this percentage is averaged with the quantitative percentage to determine whether it is high, medium or low.

In the case of the criminal expression of **chemical precursors and essential chemicals**, a **high correlation** with the illicit drug market was determined, since 80% of the chemical precursors were seized in clandestine drug laboratories and 83% of the chemical substances were seized in clandestine drug laboratories, and it also presents a relationship with the chain of production, trafficking and sales.

On the other hand, the **criminal market of weapons** shows a **moderate relationship** with the criminal market of drugs, in 13% of the events of **ammunition and special weapons** seizures, **20%** of the events of general **weapons seizures**, **7%** of the events of **explosives** seizures, **15%** of the events of **grenade** seizures, and **15%** of the events of **cartridge** seizures, **drugs were also seized**. There is also a direct relationship with Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) that are mainly involved in the illicit drug market, buying, trafficking and selling weapons to the illegal market to increase their coercive power.

The criminal drug market is related to **criminal expressions with currency**, presenting a **moderate relationship**, since in **51%** of the events of seizures of **national currency**, **2%** of the events of seizures of **counterfeit national currency**, **18%** of the events of seizures of **dollars**, **8%** of the events of seizures of **counterfeit dollars**, **2%** of the events of seizures of **euros**, and **13%** of the events of seizures of **Colombian pesos**, **drugs were also seized**. There is also a direct relationship since TCOs need to traffic and launder the currency obtained from the illicit drug market through various illicit operations (Prevention and Identification of Transactions of Illicit Resources/money laundering).

Likewise, the criminal drug market is related to criminal expressions of illicit wildlife trafficking, **50%** of the events of seizures of **endangered species**, **57%** of the events of seizures of **protected species** and **48%** of the events of seizures of **turtle eggs were**

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also drugs were seized. It is also related to the lifestyle of TOCs, which traffic wildlife species for domestic use (pets) and/or personal exhibition.

Finally, the criminal market of drugs is related to criminal expressions of illicit trafficking of fuels; in **17%** of the events of diesel seizures, **1%** of the events of **petrol** seizures, and **12%** of the events of **jet fuel** seizures, **drugs were also seized.** In addition, there is a direct relationship between the illicit trafficking of jet fuel and the aircrafts used for the illicit trafficking of drugs (mainly from South America to Mexico) and currency (mainly from the U.S.).

The **criminal market of drugs detonates and/or amplifies diverse criminal expressions**, as it is related to diverse criminal markets due to its **transnational** and **multifaceted** nature. Mainly with the criminal market of chemical precursors, weapons, currency, wildlife, fuels; however, it is not exclusive to these, as the criminal phenomenon evolves, its involvement with other criminal expressions is transformed, for instance cybercrime.

Having said this, Mexico actively promotes an **integral, multidisciplinary** and **holistic** vision of the drug phenomenon, through international cooperation and the exchange of information.