AFGHANISTAN INTERPROVINCIAL OPIATE TRAFFICKING DYNAMICS

November 2013
Acknowledgements

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It has been proven that providing theoretical training alone does not aid capacity building - practical, and specifically on-the-job, training are also essential. With that in mind, the Afghan Opiate Trade Project (AOTP) has started an on-the-job research training initiative in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Afghanistan office at MCN. The present report is part of a series of studies that gather critical information while also training MCN staff to conduct research. During the study, a team of MCN staff from the Research and Law Enforcement Directorates visited 18 provinces across Afghanistan and conducted face-to-face interviews with numerous official and non-official informants.

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**Abbreviations and Acronyms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>Acetic Anhydride</td>
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<tr>
<td>ABP</td>
<td>Afghan Border Police</td>
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<tr>
<td>Afs</td>
<td>Afghanis (Afghan currency)</td>
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<td>AGE</td>
<td>Anti-Government Elements</td>
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<td>AOTP</td>
<td>Afghan Opiate Trade Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>CN</td>
<td>Counter Narcotics</td>
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<td>CNPA</td>
<td>Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan</td>
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<td>CND</td>
<td>Commission on Narcotic Drugs</td>
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<tr>
<td>FATA</td>
<td>Federally Administered Tribal Areas</td>
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<td>MCN</td>
<td>Ministry of Counter Narcotics</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDCS</td>
<td>National Drug Control Strategy</td>
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<td>UNODC</td>
<td>United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime</td>
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I. Preface

Afghanistan is currently attracting much attention with regard to opium poppy cultivation and opiate trafficking. The Government of Afghanistan is working very hard to eliminate opium poppy cultivation in the country but it remains on-going to a great extent, mainly in southern Afghanistan. However, significant progress has been made recently. Several years ago, opium poppy cultivation was widespread and occurred in almost all provinces of Afghanistan. With the exception of a few provinces in southern and western Afghanistan, opium poppy cultivation does not currently exist, or exists only at negligible levels.

Since it was established, the Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN) has been committed to countering the threat of narcotics, working with Government line ministries and supported by the international community. With 34 offices located in Kabul and various other provinces, MCN has enlarged its network to reach the people of Afghanistan more closely.

Countering narcotics is a lengthy and difficult process and there are numerous examples of its occurrence worldwide, past and present. Therefore, it will take a long time to put a stop to illicit opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan. The problem can only be solved with long-term commitment and strategies. Of course, the level of opium production will vary over the years. But we must always look at the bigger picture. And at the moment, the bigger picture is encouraging us to be positive about the future.

We, the people of Afghanistan, will solve this problem with the help of friends of Afghanistan. Although the country was involved in wars for 30 years, it still has sufficient human resources within its Government organizations to tackle the problem. However, while we are working very hard to solve the problem in Afghanistan, we ask our immediate neighbours and the international community to commit to the same fight within their borders. If we all clear our houses at once, we will have a clear environment everywhere. Now is the time to initiate and implement the 2009 political declaration of The Commission on Narcotics Drugs (CND). We have seven years to reach the target set in 2009. Afghanistan will do its best to rid the country of narcotics within this time frame, but we also ask countries with a large number of heroin users to decrease the demand for narcotics. We also ask countries that have major illicit trafficking routes passing through them to enhance controls at all their ports.

In southern Afghanistan, Anti-Government Elements (AGE) and opium poppy cultivation have a mutually beneficial relationship. The AGE operating in Afghanistan rely mainly on illicit activities, including the opiate trade, to continue their operations. Therefore, they often force or push farmers into opium poppy cultivation. They also manipulate the market by increasing opium prices just before poppy-planting season, in order to coerce farmers.

Another important reason for the existence of opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan is the high demand for narcotics in consumer countries in Europe and Asia. Organized criminal groups
in these countries make significant profits every year through trafficking and selling opiates. Unless the demand goes down, opium poppy cultivation will continue – whether in Afghanistan or elsewhere. Therefore, consumer countries also need to enhance their activities to combat organized criminal groups and to decrease or halt opiate consumption. Intelligence and information sharing and joint operations conducted by Afghanistan and its neighbours against AGE are essential.

MCN urges the international community and the United Nations States Members to take the necessary steps to stop the global drug trade and trafficking on the basis of shared responsibility. A balanced approach should be adopted and appropriate policies should be implemented by all countries within which opiates are produced, trafficked or consumed. Attempts to counter only the production of opiates will not result in a sustainable solution in terms of countering narcotics at a global level.

MCN has developed and launched national Counter Narcotics (CN) policies for the provision of alternative livelihoods, drug demand reduction and law enforcement. Work is also progressing on the development of policies on anti-trafficking and counter narcotics plans at a provincial level. The National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS) of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has also been updated. It is time to act together to counter the threat of narcotics on a global level.
II. Introduction

Opiates originating in Afghanistan pose a national and global threat. An increasing number of drug users within the country\(^1\) and the fact that significant revenues are generated by the illicit trafficking of opiates to other countries\(^2\) has made countering the opiate trade a necessity for the Government of Afghanistan. An in-depth knowledge of opiate and precursor trafficking to and from the country will help channel the Government’s efforts in the right direction.

It was with that aim in mind that the present research study was launched by MCN, with the support of UNODC (Afghan Opiate Trade Project (AOTP) and Building Afghan Counter Narcotics Analytical Capacity for Evidence-Based Policy and Advocacy Project). At the same time, the study aimed to enhance the research capacity of MCN. As a result, several MCN staff worked alongside UNODC researchers while fieldwork was being conducted for the study.

Within Afghanistan, the main trafficking routes to other countries in the region and beyond are located in the southern region bordering Pakistan, the northern region bordering Central Asia and the western region bordering the Islamic Republic of Iran. Opiates are also trafficked for internal consumption within Afghanistan. The present study focuses on interprovincial opiate and precursor trafficking routes in the various regions of the country, the major ways in which drugs are trafficked, the costs involved in trafficking, the involvement of Anti-Government Elements (AGE) and the Taliban in the drug trade and possible locations of opiate stocks. It also attempts to examine the capacity of heroin-processing laboratories, the types of adulterants used and the role played by hawaladars\(^3\).

The report will initially give an overview of the methodology used to conduct the study. It will then examine each element of the country’s opiate trade – the production, processing and stocking of opiates, the precursors used, trafficking routes and networks and the involvement of the Taliban and AGE. Subsequently, it will look at the role of the hawala system and detail the practices and customs of the hawaladars. The report will also identify threats posed by such practices and offer suggestions as to how they can be addressed.

In conclusion, the report will summarize the results of the study and make recommendations on how the Government of Afghanistan could intervene, both through increasing its own capacity to counter trafficking and through introducing policy that would eliminate any gaps in the system that allow drug production to occur.

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3 Hawaladars can be broadly defined as money brokers that form part of an informal money transfer system that relies heavily on trust and connections such as family relationships (Interpol General Secretariat, *The hawala alternative remittance system and its role in money laundering, 2000*)
III. Methodology

The main instruments used for the study were two questionnaires - one focusing on interprovincial drug trafficking dynamics in Afghanistan and the other examining the *hawala* system. The 18 provinces listed below were selected as a sample, on the basis of their involvement in internal drug trafficking in Afghanistan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Provinces</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North-eastern region</td>
<td>Badakhshan, Baghlan, Kunduz, Takhar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern region</td>
<td>Balkh, Faryab, Jawzjan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern (and south-western)</td>
<td>Hilmand, Kandahar, Nimroz, Uruzgan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central region</td>
<td>Bamyan, Parwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern region</td>
<td>Nangarhar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western region</td>
<td>Badghis, Farah, Ghor, Hirat</td>
</tr>
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</table>

As well as administering the questionnaire, the researchers also wrote assessment reports on each province visited, describing their interactions with people in those provinces. MCN staff travelled to all the provinces listed above and conducted interviews with officials (from the relevant Government and non-Government institutions working on CN) and key informants.

The study was designed in January 2012; the field survey began in February and was completed in June. The final report was written in July/August 2012. For the research on interprovincial opiate flows, 231 interviews were conducted with officials and key informants. For the research on the *hawala* system in Afghanistan, 92 interviews were conducted with key informants. All the graphs and tables provided in the report, unless otherwise stated, are based on frequency distributions of the questionnaire responses.
IV. Opiate Trafficking

Opiate trafficking is widespread throughout Afghanistan, with drug traffickers using prominent transportation routes across all regions. Opium and heroin are the main drugs produced and transported, while morphine is also trafficked to and from several provinces covered by the research study. Drug traffickers in the various provinces maintain close links with their counterparts in other provinces and have access to a growing transportation network. The following section of the report examines the origins and destinations of Afghan opiates both within Afghanistan and in the foreign countries to which they are trafficked.

a. North-eastern Region:

Opium:

Map 1: Interprovincial movement of opium in north-eastern Afghanistan

In north-eastern Afghanistan, opium poppy cultivation is ongoing in Badakhshan Province, which also serves as the central point for drug trafficking networks in the region. During their visit to the province, MCN researchers were informed that opium from Argo, Darayim, Tishkan and Kishim Districts of Badakhshan was transported to Fayzabad District.
From Fayzabad, opium is transferred to Ishkashim and Shighnan Districts of Badakhshan and subsequently to Tajikistan via the main ring road and other unofficial routes. A majority of interviewees indicated that opium brought into the province came from Kunduz, Nangarhar and Takhar. Kabul and Baghlan were also mentioned as sources. According to the interviewees, Tajikistan is the most prominent destination for opium trafficked out of the province, while Takhar (and to a lesser extent Kunduz) were also mentioned.

Takhar, particularly Rustaq District, serves as a transit point for opium trafficking. Opium is transferred into Takhar from several other provinces including Baghlan, Kabul and Nangarhar before being trafficked onwards, primarily to Tajikistan and Badakhshan.

Kunduz plays a similar role, as opium enters from Nangarhar, Baghlan, Kabul and Badakhshan Provinces and is then sent on to Balkh Province via Qala-i-Zal, or to Takhar and Badakhshan and onward to Tajikistan across the unofficial border at Imam Sahib.

While according to UNODC survey reports⁴ Takhar and Kunduz are poppy free, poppy farms can still be found in Baghlan Province. Opium is also brought into the province, with most interviewees pointing to Kabul and Takhar as sources (Nangarhar and Balkh were also mentioned). The opium produced in and trafficked into Baghlan is then trafficked onward, mainly to Takhar and Kunduz. Some interviewees also mentioned Bamyan and Badakhshan Provinces as possible destinations.

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Badakhshan is an important hub for heroin trafficking and heroin is brought into the province from northern and eastern provinces (Kabul, Nangarhar and Baghlan are the primary sources). Information gathered by MCN researchers indicated that the heroin trafficked out of the province travelled primarily to Tajikistan and Pakistan, and to a lesser extent to Takhar, Kabul and Balkh.

Takhar Province (especially Rustaq District) is a prominent transit point for heroin - the drug is brought into the province from several other provinces including Baghlan, Kabul and Nangarhar before being trafficked onward, primarily to Tajikistan and Badakhshan.

Kunduz is similar in that heroin enters the province from Nangarhar, Baghlan, Kabul and Badakhshan Provinces and is then trafficked onward to Balkh via Qala-i-Zal, or to Takhar and Badakhshan and onward to Tajikistan across the unofficial border at Imam Sahib.

Baghlan Province receives heroin from Nangarhar, Kabul and, to a lesser extent, Balkh. Badakhshan, Kunduz and Takhar are the primary destinations for heroin trafficked out of the province, while Bamyan also features to a minor extent.
b. Northern Region:

Opium:

Map 3: Interprovincial movement of opium in northern Afghanistan

In northern Afghanistan, Balkh Province (particularly Dawlatabad District) is a significant centre for drug trafficking. Interviews with key informants indicate that poppy farms still exist in the province and that most of the opium trafficked in originates from Sari Pul and Baghlan, while Faryab and Jawzjan also contribute to a certain extent. Opium is often brought into the province via the ring road and leaves in the same way. Interviewees identified Kandahar, Hilmand and Jawzjan as the most prominent destinations for the opium, along with Uzbekistan. Faryab, Kabul, Ghor and Turkmenistan also featured to a certain extent.

Opium trafficked into Faryab originates primarily from Jawzjan, Balkh, Sari Pul and Baghlan, while the Mazar-Shibirghan-Maimana road serves as the main trafficking route. Opium trafficked out of the province is usually destined for Turkmenistan, since the border is largely unsecure. Badghis is another important destination (via the main ring road) while Ghor, Hilmand, Hirat, Nimroz and the Islamic Republic of Iran were also mentioned as possible destinations during interviews.
Jawzjan is not a significant producer of opium. As a result, local demand is met by inward trafficking - research indicates that Balkh and Sari Pul are prominent suppliers, while Faryab and Baghlan also feature. Aqcha District is the main hub for drug trade in Jawzjan province and most drug traffickers’ networks are active there. MCN researchers also found that opium was trafficked outwards from the two border districts of Khamyab and Qarqin into Turkmenistan across the Amo River, using handmade boats. Faryab was the other main destination mentioned by interviewees, while Balkh was viewed as a minor source.

**Heroin:**

*Map 4: Interprovincial movement of heroin in northern Afghanistan*

As is the case with opium, Balkh is a significant province with regard to heroin trafficking in northern Afghanistan. Interviews conducted during the research study indicate that heroin is transported into the province primarily from Badakhshan, Takhar, Nangarhar, Hilmand and Kabul, while Kunduz and Kandahar contribute to a lesser extent. Heroin trafficked out of the province is transported in various directions, towards the Islamic Republic of Iran (by air), Uzbekistan (via the official border at Hairatan) and Faryab and Jawzjan (via the ring road) among others. Heroin trafficked to Faryab and Jawzjan is eventually sent on to Turkmenistan.
Badghis, Nimroz, Hilmand and Hirat are the primary sources of heroin trafficked into Faryab while Balkh, Ghor and Kabul were also mentioned as possible sources during interviews. Turkmenistan is the main destination for heroin trafficked out of the province as a result of the largely insecure border. Jawzjan and Balkh are other possible destinations.

Jawzjan does not see any significant heroin production so local demand is met through trafficking, primarily from Balkh and Badakhshan. Other, less-prominent sources of heroin are Faryab, Kabul, Nangarhar, Takhar and Baghlan. The heroin leaving the province is transported in various directions – some is trafficked to Sari Pul for local consumption, some is transferred to the Aqina border in Faryab and a significant amount is transported on boats across the Amo River to Turkmenistan.

c. Southern Region:

Opium:

Map 5: Interprovincial movement of opium in southern Afghanistan

In southern Afghanistan, there is significant poppy cultivation in Kandahar Province. Certain districts in the province have seen a fall in production, but that has been compensated by an
increase in less secure districts such as Maywand and Ghorak. Researchers also found that trafficking patterns had changed in Kandahar over the previous 5-6 years. The amount of opium smuggled into the province from northern Afghanistan has decreased; only small amounts are trafficked from the north along the main ring road connecting Kandahar with Kabul. However, opium is trafficked into Nesh District of Kandahar from Uruzgan. Other provinces supplying Kandahar with opium include Zabul, Takhar, Badakhshan and Baghlan. Hilmand and Pakistan’s Balochistan Province are the two main destinations for opium trafficked out of Kandahar; Hirat and Nimroz are more minor destinations.

Nimroz produces opium internally, while also receiving it from other provinces - Kandahar, Hilmand and Farah are seen as the main suppliers while Nangarhar, Kabul and Uruzgan also feature to a lesser extent. Most of that opium is then trafficked out to Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Abreshem Bridge, which connects Nimroz to the Islamic Republic of Iran, is an important trafficking route and a report by the Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA) states that the trafficked drugs are subsequently sent onward to countries in the Persian Gulf via Bandar Abbas and to European countries by drug traffickers working in cooperation with the Iranian border police.

Although Hilmand continues to dominate opium production in Afghanistan, a large amount of opium is also trafficked into the province. Most of it is processed into heroin, while the remainder is trafficked onward to other locations. Significant amounts of opium are trafficked into Hilmand from Day Kundi, Uruzgan, Ghor and Kandahar, while several other provinces including Badghis and Farah supply smaller amounts. Hirat, Nimroz and Pakistan’s Balochistan Province are the primary destinations for opium trafficked out of Hilmand, while Kandahar and Farah also feature.

With regard to Uruzgan, no opium is trafficked in from adjacent provinces. The opium produced in Day Kundi Province and Charchino District in Uruzgan is trafficked to Baghran District in Hilmand. Opium from Dihrawud District in Uruzgan is trafficked to Kajaki and Nesh Districts in Hilmand. During the study, MCN researchers found that cars and trucks were the primary Opiate Carriers in Hilmand:

Given the vast nature of the opiate trade in the province, it is unsurprising that several opiate carriers operate in Hilmand. Interviews with a number of informants provided MCN researchers with the following information on opiate transportation costs:

- The cost of transporting 1 kg of opium/morphine/heroin from Hilmand to Nimroz, Hirat or Bahram Chah is 1,000-2,500 Afghanis (Afs) or US$ 20-51.
- The cost of transporting one shipment consisting of 150-300 kg of opiates from central Hilmand to Bahram Chah is around 200,000-300,000 Pakistani Rupees (US$ 2,100-3,150).
- The cost of transporting one shipment consisting of 1,000-2,000 kg of opiates from Musa Qala to Bahram Chah is 1,000,000-1,500,000 Pakistani Rupees (US$ 10,450-15,700).
means of transportation and that traffickers were able to earn around US$ 1,600 (82,000 Afs) for trafficking one shipment consisting of 900-1,000 kg of opium from Dihrawud District in Uruzgan to Kajaki and Nesh.

**Heroin:**

**Map 6: Interprovincial movement of heroin in southern Afghanistan**

Heroin trafficking is common in Kandahar - Hilmand and Nangarhar are the primary sources of heroin trafficked into the province. Heroin is also trafficked out of the province to Pakistan and several other provinces of Afghanistan including Nimroz, Kunduz, Kabul, Hirat and Hilmand. There have also been a number of seizures of heroin trafficked through Kandahar airport, when the drug were apparently destined for India.

In the case of Nimroz, its main sources of heroin are Kandahar, Hilmand and Farah. The main destinations for heroin trafficked out of the province are the Islamic Republic of Iran (via the Abreshem Bridge) and Pakistan.

Heroin trafficking to and from Hilmand is also significant and most of the heroin is produced in the province itself. The heroin produced in Hilmand is mainly sent on to Hirat, Kandahar, Kunduz, Nimroz and Pakistan, while several other provinces including Badakhshan and Balkh.
are also supplied to a lesser extent. The heroin trafficked to Hirat is eventually sent on to the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkmenistan.

Uruzgan is neither a producer nor an exporter of heroin. Local demand is met by heroin transported in from Hilmand or Kandahar.

**Morphine:**

**Map 7: Interprovincial movement of morphine in southern Afghanistan**

The southern region of Afghanistan is significant with regard to morphine trafficking within the country. Hilmand receives morphine from Kandahar. Morphine trafficked out of the province heads in several directions, but the majority is transported to Nimroz and Hirat Provinces in Afghanistan; Kandahar and Farah are more minor destinations. MCN researchers also reported an increase in morphine trafficking from Hilmand to the Islamic Republic of Iran via Balochistan Province in Pakistan.

Information provided by drug traffickers also indicates that morphine is trafficked in large quantities to Balochistan Province in Pakistan before being sent directly to the Islamic Republic of Iran. Small heroin-processing laboratories, which process morphine into heroin and crystal, operate in the border areas of Balochistan. Some Baluch traffickers also operate heroin-
processing laboratories in the Zahidan area of the Islamic Republic of Iran and traffic the necessary morphine from Afghanistan. MCN researchers were informed that morphine was also trafficked to onwards to Turkey, where drug traffickers operate small heroin-processing laboratories.

Morphine is transported into Nimroz primarily from Hilmand and Kandahar, while Nangarhar and Farah contribute to a lesser extent. Most of the morphine trafficked out of Nimroz is destined for either the Islamic Republic of Iran or Pakistan.

Kandahar receives morphine from Hilmand and Nangarhar. Pakistan is the most prominent destination for outgoing morphine, while Hirat, Hilmand and Nimroz feature in interviewees’ responses to a lesser extent.

d. Central Region:

Opium:

Map 8: Interprovincial movement of opium in central Afghanistan

Bamyan in central Afghanistan is home to around 10,000 drug users (according to data assimilated from CNPA, drug treatement centres and other sources) and sees a significant amount of opium trafficking. Interviews conducted by MCN researchers indicate that most
respondents consider Baghlan, Kapisa and Kabul to be significant suppliers of opium, while Parwan and Day Kundi were also mentioned. Most opium available in Bamyan is trafficked to other districts within the province - Yakawlang District is particularly important. The researchers made the interesting discovery that drug users in Bamyan City were careful not carry more than the 4-gram limit, which would result in imprisonment.

Interviewees believe that opium trafficked into Parwan Province originates primarily from Kabul and Kapisa, while Balkh, Baghlan and Nangarhar contribute to a lesser extent. Opium leaving the province is transported in various directions – interviewees mentioned Kunduz, Takhar and Wardak as being prominent destinations.

**Heroin:**

*Map 9: Interprovincial movement of heroin in central Afghanistan*

Kabul is considered by all interviewees to be the sole supplier of heroin to Bamyan. Interviewees also believe that no heroin is trafficked out of Bamyan. Researchers found that a significant amount of the heroin entering Parwan from Kabul was carried by local drug users. Heroin trafficked into Parwan comes from Kabul and Nangarhar, while Kapisa contributes to a lesser extent. Balkh, Kunduz and Takhar featured prominently in interviewees’ responses.
regarding destinations for outward trafficking of heroin, while Baghlan and Wardak also featured to a minor extent.

d. Eastern Region

Opium:

Map 10: Interprovincial movement of opium in eastern Afghanistan

Despite the fact that Nangarhar was declared poppy free by UNODC in 2008, researchers were informed that poppies were cultivated in several districts in the province in 2012, including Sherzad, Khogyani, Chaparhar, Achin, Pachir Wa Agam and Lal Pur. They were also informed that an increase in poppy cultivation could be expected in 2013. However, current production levels are not sufficient to cover the demand of heroin-processing laboratories in the province. As a result, opium is trafficked in from the following provinces:

- Kunar: Opium from Kunar is transported into Nangarhar primarily via the main road that connects Kunar with Jalalabad. Concealment within cars and trucks and among licit trading materials is the primary means of transporting opium.
- Laghman (and Nuristan): Opium produced in Laghman is trafficked to Nangarhar along the main Kabul-Jalalabad road. Researchers also came across reports that a number of
morphine-processing laboratories were operating in Laghman Province, which suggests that not all the opium produced in the province is trafficked into Nangarhar. Some interviewees also suggested that opium was brought into the province from Nuristan.

- **Kapisa and Kabul**: Kapisa is the main opium-producing province in central Afghanistan. Most of the opium produced there is trafficked to Nangarhar along the Kabul-Jalalabad road. The opium is initially trafficked from Tagab District of Kapisa to Sarobi District of Kabul on a minor road. It is then trafficked to Jalalabad along the main Kabul-Jalalabad road, concealed within cars and trucks and among licit trading materials.

The opium that is produced in or trafficked into Nangarhar is usually processed into morphine or heroin in laboratories operating within the province. A small proportion is also trafficked to Khyber Agency and Mohmand Agency in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Opium is trafficked to Khyber Agency via unofficial crossing points in Dur Baba, Nazyan and Achin Districts and to Mohmand Agency via unofficial crossing points in Lal Pur and Goshta Districts.

**Heroin:**

*Map 11: Interprovincial movement of heroin in eastern Afghanistan*
Heroin is not trafficked into Nangarhar but the heroin produced in the province is trafficked onward in two main directions:

- **FATA, Pakistan:** Interviews conducted by MCN researchers indicate that a proportion of the heroin produced in Nangarhar is trafficked to Khyber Agency and Mohmand Agency in Pakistan via various official and unofficial crossing points. Large heroin shipments are concealed within transit vehicles as they pass through the official border at Torkham. Information gathered by researchers indicates that there are heroin-processing laboratories located in Lal Pur District on the border with Mohmand Agency. The heroin produced there is trafficked onward to Mohmand Agency via unofficial crossing points. Heroin is also trafficked from Dur Baba, Nazyan and Achin Districts via unofficial crossing points to the Terrah Valley in Khyber Agency, before being trafficked onward to drug markets within Khyber Agency.

- **Kabul:** Part of the heroin produced in Nangarhar is trafficked in road vehicles to Kabul along the main Kabul-Jalalabad road. Kabul serves as both a consumer market and a transit point for heroin produced in Nangarhar. Some of the heroin sent to Kabul is trafficked onward through Kabul International Airport to various destinations around the world. Within Afghanistan, heroin is trafficked from Kabul in two directions. The majority goes to the northern and north-eastern provinces (Balkh and Kunduz among others) and a smaller proportion is trafficked to southern and western provinces such as Hirat.
Morphine:

Map 12: Interprovincial movement of morphine in eastern Afghanistan

The situation is similar in the case of morphine trafficking in Nangarahr province, since no morphine is brought into the province but a significant amount is trafficked out. Kandahar, Hirat, Nimroz and Pakistan all feature prominently as destinations for morphine originating in Nangarhar.
f. Western Region

Opium:

Map 13: Interprovincial movement of opium in western Afghanistan

Farah is the main opium producer in western Afghanistan. However, opium is also transported into Bakwa and Gulistan Districts of Farah from Naw Zad and Washer Districts of Hilmand. The opium trafficked out of the province is usually destined for three locations:

- Nimroz: Opium is trafficked from Bakwa District of Farah to Nimroz Province for onward trafficking to the Islamic Republic of Iran.
- Hirat: Opium is trafficked from Farah to Hirat along two routes. The first uses the ring road and the second uses other roads from Khaki Safed District to Shindand District. From Shindand, opium is trafficked onward to the border districts of Adraskan, Ghoryan and Kohsan for further trafficking via unofficial crossing points to the Islamic Republic of Iran.
- Islamic Republic of Iran: Opium from the eastern part of Farah is trafficked to border districts (Anar Dara, Qala-i-Kah, Shib Koh and Lash Wa Juwayn) in the western part of the province via main and minor roads. From the four border districts, opium is trafficked to the Islamic Republic of Iran via one official and many unofficial crossing
points. Drug traffickers use various modes of transportation for opiate trafficking including cars and trucks, animals, motorbikes and people (who carry drugs on their backs).

**Opiate Carriers in Farah:**

Given the extensive opiate trade in Farah, it is unsurprising that several carriers operate in the province. They can be placed within two broad categories:

- Carriers that transport opiates to Farah’s border districts. Such carriers usually have armed men present in their vehicles. The payment for transporting 1 kg of opium to the border areas is 500 Afs (US$ 10).
- Carriers operating mainly at the border and trafficking opiates from Farah’s border areas to the Islamic Republic of Iran. Such carriers transport opiates on animals or people. The payment for transporting 1 kg of opium to the Islamic Republic of Iran from Farah’s border areas is 1,500 Afs (US$ 30).

It is difficult to ascertain exact figures, but average shipment sizes are as follows:

- People carrying drugs on their backs: 20 kg per person
- Animals (horses, camels): 50-100 kg
- Road vehicles: 300-800 kg

Researchers learned of an interesting method used by certain carriers to transport opiates across the border in Farah. Carriers breed and keep animals (horses, camels) in specific locations in the Islamic Republic of Iran and regularly feed them drugs. They then take the drug-addicted animals to the border areas, load them with packs of opiates and let them loose. Driven by their need for drugs, the animals head directly for their original locations in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Maintaining a safe distance to avoid arrest, the traffickers follow the animals across the border.

Hirat also plays a significant role in opiate trafficking in Afghanistan, since it is located along an important smuggling route to the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkmenistan. A significant proportion of the opium produced in Hirat is trafficked to the Islamic Republic of Iran and beyond. However, it is still not able to meet the demand of those countries.

In order to meet such a demand, opium is transported into Hirat from various other provinces:

- Badghis: Opium produced in Badghis (and sometimes other northern provinces) is transported into Hirat along the main road in Karukh District. Some of the opium produced in the province is also trafficked along roads in Ab Kamari District to Kushki Kuhna District in Hirat.
• Farah: Opium is trafficked from Farah to Hirat along two main routes. The first is the ring road and the second leads from Farah’s Khaki Safed District to Hirat’s Shindand District. From there, it is sent to Adraskan, Ghoryan, and Kohsan and onward to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

• Kandahar and Hilmand: The southern part of Afghanistan is the primary source of opium transported to Hirat. The ring road is the only trafficking route in that area. Large shipments of opium from the south are usually transported in transit vehicles (Afghan or Iranian), which have permission to cross the Afghan-Iranian border at Islam Qala. In some cases, opium is transported to Hirat and then sent onward to the Islamic Republic Iran and Turkmenistan.

• Ghor: Opium is not usually transported into Ghor; instead it is trafficked out. Ghor is not a significant opium producer but small quantities of opium are occasionally transported into Hirat along the main road and other roads in Chishti Sharif and Farsi Districts.

As mentioned above, Hirat serves as a transit point for opium. The majority of opium brought into the province is subsequently trafficked onward to the Islamic Republic of Iran and, to a slightly lesser extent, Turkmenistan. Trafficking into Turkmenistan is mainly carried out by concealing opium within cars and trucks and among trading materials as they pass through the official crossing point at Tor Ghundai. Another common route used for opium trafficking in Hirat involves passing through unofficial crossing points in all the districts bordering Turkmenistan - Kushki Kuhna, Kushk (Rubat-e-Sangi) and Gulran.

Opium is smuggled from Hirat into the Islamic Republic of Iran via the official crossing point at Islam Qala and through the border districts (Gulran, Kohsan, Ghoryan and Adraskan) using a large number of unofficial crossing points. The principal trafficking method involves people carrying drugs on their backs. Difficulties faced while trafficking opiates into the Islamic Republic of Iran have at times forced traffickers to use a new route in Gulran District (located in the north-western part of Hirat Province bordering the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkmenistan). Interviewees indicated that opiates are trafficked into Turkmenistan with the help of certain Turkmen border security officials and are then sent onward into the Islamic Republic of Iran. Researchers found that the border between Turkmenistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran was poorly protected and that traffickers were easily able to cross and transport opiates into the Islamic Republic of Iran. It should be noted that the Turkmen border police do not allow drug traffickers to leave the areas controlled by the border police.

Information provided by the Afghan Border Police (ABP) indicates a 30-40 per cent decrease in opiate trafficking via unofficial crossing points to the Islamic Republic of Iran. However, there appears to have been a 40-60 per cent increase in opiate trafficking via Islam Qala using transit vehicles. The increase in the drug trade also explains the significant presence of opiate traffickers in the province.
The situation differs in Ghor Province, where farmers favour cultivating opium over wheat. Ghor’s licit agricultural industry relies heavily on rains and poppy cultivation does not require the same level of irrigation as wheat cultivation. From 2003 onward, poppy cultivation in Ghor declined steadily and in 2008, the province was declared poppy free. That remained the case until 2011. However, during the present study, researchers found that poppy cultivation had increased in 2012 in all districts of Ghor, including the capital city Chaghcharan.

Ghor serves as a transit point for opium trafficked from northern Afghanistan to the heroin-processing industry in Hilmand. Opium is trafficked into Ghor along mountainous routes in the north, with most interviewees considering Faryab to be an important supplier (Sari Pul, Badghis, Day Kundi and Bamyan were also mentioned as suppliers). The majority of opium is then trafficked onward to Hilmand, while Hirat is a more minor recipient. From Kohistan District in Faryab, it is trafficked on motorbikes and animals to Charsada District in Ghor. From there, it is sent to Pasaband District in Ghor along various routes to the east or west of Chaghcharan City, before being trafficked onward to Baghran District in Hilmand. Opium is also transported via Ghor to Baghran from Jawand District in Badghis Province. A small proportion of the opium transported into Ghor is also trafficked into Hirat along the main road from Chaghcharan, among others.

Opiate Carriers in Hirat:

The official crossing at Islam Qala is a significant exit point from Afghanistan for individuals carrying opiates in cars and trucks. Both Afghan and Iranian nationals are involved in carrying opiates to specific locations, and many carriers use their own vehicles for that purpose. Carriers create hiding places within the vehicles, in which drugs can be concealed. MCN researchers were informed by ABP officials that in addition to concealing opiates within vehicles, traffickers used the following two methods to prevent detection:

- Perfume and pepper: Perfume and pepper are used in opiate shipments to prevent detection by sniffer dogs.
- Carbon paper: Opiates are packed within carbon paper to prevent detection by scanning devices.

Researchers also found that the payment for transporting opiates across the official crossing was significant - there is a high risk of seizure and the vehicles tend to carry opiates to major cities, which are usually located far from the border. The payment for transporting 1 kg of opiates across unofficial crossing points is 1,250-2,500 Afs (US$ 25-50). That increases to 5,000-6,000 Afs (US$ 100-125) when traffickers pass through official crossing points. The payment for transporting heroin is slightly higher. Individuals who carry drugs on their backs work in groups of 10-20, with each person carrying 15-20 kg. Each group is protected by 4-5 armed men, who ensure their safety and in fact earn more than the carriers themselves (each earns around 25,000-50,000 Afs or US$ 500-1,000).
Badghis, which produces as well as facilitates the transit of opium, serves as a link between the western and northern regions of Afghanistan. Opium from northern Afghanistan is trafficked through Badghis to the western and southern parts of the country. Opium trafficked from Faryab (particularly Ghormach District) enters the province along the main road and other smaller roads. The mode of transportation depends on the size of the shipment – cars and trucks are used for large shipments, while motorbikes are used for smaller shipments.

Opium both produced in Badghis and transported into the province is trafficked onward along four routes to various destinations. Some opium is trafficked through Jawand District to Charsada and Chaghcharan Districts in Ghor Province for further trafficking into Hilmand Province. Some is trafficked across unofficial crossing points to Turkmenistan (particularly in the Maruchak area of Murghab District). Another portion is trafficked along the main road to Herat City, concealed within vehicles. Some opium is also trafficked through the Sang Atesh area of Ab Kamari District to the official crossing point at Tor Ghundai in Hirat. From there, opium is trafficked onward to the Kariz Ilyas area and eventually to Gulran District for further trafficking into the Islamic Republic of Iran.

**Heroin:**

Map 14: Interprovincial movement of heroin in western Afghanistan
Farah Province is a significant producer of heroin. Additionally, heroin is trafficked into Farah’s Bakwa District from Hilmand’s Naw Zad and WASHER Districts. From Bakwa, it is trafficked onward - interviewees indicated that Nimroz, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Hirat were the primary destinations. In the case of trafficking to the Islamic Republic of Iran, the heroin is transported to the border districts of Farah and then across one official and many unofficial crossing points.

Trafficking to Hirat sees heroin transported from Khaki Safed District in Farah to Shindand District in Hirat and then onward to Hirat’s border districts. Heroin is also trafficked from Farah along the ring road to Herat City, Islam Qala, Tor Ghundai and Gulran District.

Heroin trafficking in Hirat is similar to opium trafficking in the province. Hirat does not produce a sufficient amount of heroin to meet the demand in the Islamic Republic of Iran and therefore heroin is trafficked into the province from various other areas:

- **Farah:** Heroin produced in Farah is transported into Hirat along two main routes. The first is the ring road, along which the drug is transported to Herat City before being trafficked onward to crossing points at Islam Qala and Tor Ghundai and border districts to the west and north of the province. The second route runs from Khaki Safed to Shindand. From Shindand, the heroin is trafficked onward to Adraskan, Ghoryan and Kohsan Districts.
- **Kandahar and Hilmand:** Along with Farah, the two provinces provide the bulk of heroin trafficked into Hirat. Heroin from the south is trafficked into Hirat via the ring road before being sent onward to official crossing points and border districts.
- **Nangarhar:** The CNPA and border police officials informed MCN researchers that heroin was trafficked into Hirat along the southern ring road and subsequently trafficked onward to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Once it has reached Hirat, heroin is trafficked onward to three main destinations:

- **The Islamic Republic of Iran:** A significant proportion of the heroin in Hirat is trafficked to the Islamic Republic of Iran via Islam Qala and other unofficial crossing points within the province. The Islamic Republic of Iran is an important market for opiates, but heroin is also trafficked onward to other countries in the region and in Europe. Heroin is trafficked to the Islamic Republic of Iran through all the border districts – Dahanae Zulfeqar in Gulran District, Ghoryan District and Kalata Nazar Khan in Anar Dara District are particularly notorious in that regard.
- **Turkmenistan:** Along with the Islamic Republic of Iran, Turkmenistan is a primary destination for heroin trafficked from Hirat. Heroin is trafficked into Turkmenistan via the official crossing point at Tor Ghundai and many other unofficial crossing points in districts that border Turkmenistan.
- **Badghis and the northern provinces:** Heroin is trafficked to Badghis Province for local consumption and sometimes for further trafficking to the northern provinces. Some of
the heroin enters Badghis Province via Kushki Kuhna District before reaching the border with Turkmenistan.

Most of the heroin entering Badghis is trafficked from Hirat along the main road and other roads in Ab Kamari District. Some is transported into the province from Faryab. Turkmenistan is the primary destination for onward trafficking; traffickers use motorbikes, small boats and their own backs to transport opiates into Turkmenistan. Maruchak in Murghab District is particularly notorious for opiate trafficking.

The inhabitants of a number of those areas (including Maruchak) belong to Turkmen tribes. Some have dual nationality, own property on both sides of the border and are involved in transporting opiates into Turkmenistan. In addition to Turkmenistan, some interviewees also mentioned Faryab as a possible destination for the onward trafficking of heroin.

**Morphine:**

Map 15: Interprovincial movement of morphine in western Afghanistan

Morphine is trafficked into Farah from Hilmand. The destinations of the morphine trafficked out of the province are exactly the same as those for heroin – Nimroz, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Hirat.
As with opium and heroin, Hirat does not produce a sufficient amount of morphine to meet the demand in the Islamic Republic of Iran and so morphine is trafficked into the province from various other provinces. The main sources are Kandahar, Hilmand and Farah, while some interviewees also mentioned Nangarhar as a possible source.

From Farah, morphine is transported into Hirat along two routes. The first route sees it transported along the ring road to Herat City before being trafficked onward to crossing points at Islam Qala and Tor Ghundai and border districts to the west and north of the province. With regard to the second route, morphine is trafficked from Khaki Safed to Shindand. It is then trafficked onward to Adraskan, Ghoryan and Kohsan Districts. The ring road is also used to transport morphine into the province from Kandahar, Hilmand and Nangarhar. A number of informants also told researchers that until two years ago, morphine was brought into Hirat from Badghis Province along the main road in Karukh District and various other roads in Ab Kamari District and then on to Kushki Kuhna District. Currently, there is no evidence that that route is being used.

After reaching Hirat, morphine is trafficked primarily to the Islamic Republic of Iran via Islam Qala and other unofficial crossing points within the province. While the Islamic Republic of Iran is an important market for opiates, morphine is also trafficked onward to other countries in the region and in Europe. It is trafficked into the Islamic Republic of Iran through all the border districts and from several locations, including Dahanae Zulfeqar in Gulran District, Ghoryan District and Kalata Nazar Khan in Anar Dara.

Badghis is not a significant province with regard to morphine trafficking in Afghanistan; interviews conducted by MCN researchers indicate that Badghis does not receive any trafficked morphine. However, on 29 July 2009 the Badghis CNPA seized 27 kg of morphine from a car and detained five people who were attempting to traffic it from Faryab to Herat City. That seizure could be viewed as confirmation of the presence of heroin/morphine-processing laboratories in Faryab Province, which would render morphine trafficking into the province a possibility. A small number of interviewees also mentioned Hirat as possible destination for morphine trafficked out of the province, again giving credence to the theory that the province serves as a transit point.

**g. Trafficking methods:**

The drug trade in Afghanistan involves several different organizations and a multitude of provinces, all of which use different trafficking methods. Figure 1 illustrates the variety of methods used for opium trafficking in the country and for each method indicates the percentage of respondents in each province who believe that that particular method is used.

As illustrated, the vehicles used for transporting drugs vary greatly between provinces. Interviewees believe that while Badakhshan, Kandahar and Nimroz use cars, trucks and motorbikes in relatively equal measure, the presence of bodies of water in Balkh and Jawzjan
means that drug traffickers operating there rely heavily on boats. The low percentage of respondents who believe that drug traffickers use trains may suggest that strict security checks are in place on railway routes. However, it could also suggest that Afghan trains do not often reach the destinations to which traffickers wish to transport their drugs. Another interesting detail brought to light by interviewees was the significant use of animals in Baghlan and Farah Provinces.

Figure 1: Opium Trafficking Methods (Percentage of total responses in each province)

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<th>Province</th>
<th>Car</th>
<th>Truck</th>
<th>Boat</th>
<th>Body</th>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>Motorbike</th>
<th>Train</th>
<th>Aeroplane</th>
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V. Trafficking of Acetic Anhydride and Other Chemical Precursors

Afghanistan’s significant drug trade suggests that there is a large market for acetic anhydride (AA) and other chemical precursors. The following chart confirms that - interviewees in the majority of provinces believe that precursors are trafficked into their province.

Figure 2: Are AA and other precursors trafficked into this province?

The quantity of precursors trafficked depends on the quantity of drugs manufactured and trafficked. The chart below reflects that, with Hilmand (which has an extensive drug trade) receiving the largest shipments of trafficked precursors.

Figure 3: How much AA is trafficked in one shipment? (Average of all responses for each province)
a. **North-eastern Region:**

Map 16: Interprovincial movement of precursors in north-eastern Afghanistan

Interviews conducted in Badakhshan indicate that precursors are transported into the province primarily from Balkh, Kabul, Kunduz, Nangarhar, Takhar and Pakistan. The interviews do not indicate any outward trafficking of precursors from the province. The sources of the precursors transported to Takhar Province are similar to those for Badakhshan Province - most interviewees stated that Nangarhar, Kabul, Kunduz and Balkh supplied precursors to Takhar. Precursors are trafficked out of Takhar to Badakhshan.

Nangarhar, Balkh and Kabul were also viewed by interviewees as the most prominent suppliers of AA and other precursors to Kunduz. The precursors leaving the province are usually bound for Badakhshan and transported via the ring road.

In the case of Baghlan, most of the precursors transported into the province originate from Nangarhar, Balkh and Kabul. Those exiting the province are transported primarily along the ring road to Kunduz, Takhar and Badakhshan.
**b. Northern Region:**

Map 17: Interprovincial movement of precursors in northern Afghanistan

Most interviews conducted by MCN researchers provided no evidence that precursors were trafficked into Faryab, but a minority indicated that precursors were brought into the province from Hirat. In such cases, researchers were informed that the precursors usually followed one of two routes. One first passes through Badghis before leading to Qaysar District in Faryab. The second passes through Ghor Province and leads to Kohistan District in Faryab. However, the CNPA did not report any precursor seizures in the province. Information gathered by MCN researchers indicates that in the past, heroin laboratories operated in Kohistan and Qaysar and received the required precursors from Ghor and Badghis Provinces. Since both laboratories were located on the borders of Faryab, precursors did not have to travel further into the province. Current CNPA information indicates that there are no active heroin-processing laboratories in the province.

MCN researchers did not come across any evidence to suggest that Jawzjan Province saw any inward or outward precursor trafficking. Likewise, interviews conducted in Balkh did not indicate any inward or outward trafficking, but most interviewees in north-eastern Afghanistan indicated that the province was a transit point for precursors trafficked into the region.
Given its flourishing drug trade, it is unsurprising that southern Afghanistan sees a significant amount of precursor trafficking. AA and other precursors are trafficked into Kandahar along two main routes. One is the long and poorly guarded border with Balochistan Province in Pakistan - the busy border in Spin Boldak District is a particularly easy target. MCN researchers noted that while hundreds of trailers and containers crossed the border daily, there was a lack of adequate equipment available to border control officers, which facilitated the trafficking of AA and other precursors. The other major route leads into Kandahar from western Afghanistan (through Hirat and Nimroz). AA and other precursors enter the country from the Islamic Republic of Iran via one of two border towns - Islam Qala and Zaranj. From there, some of the trafficked chemicals reach the Kandahar market via the main ring road.

It is important to note that while the majority of AA and other precursors that arrive in Kandahar are used within the province, a small proportion is trafficked onward to Kabul, Badakhshan, Farah and Hilmand. Kandahar is also an important province with regard to the stockpiling of AA and other precursors.
MCN researchers were also informed that drug traffickers transported AA containers from the Islamic Republic of Iran to Nimroz Province. Interviews conducted during the research study suggest that AA and other precursors are also brought into the province from Bahram Chah in Hilmand. Reports also indicate that packages of precursors are transported into Afghanistan (especially Nimroz) from China and Dubai. AA is transported in to Nimroz on trucks and then trafficked onward to Farah, Hilmand, Kandahar, Kabul and other provinces that have heroin-processing laboratories.

Hilmand is another significant province with regard to AA and precursor trafficking, as vast quantities of chemicals originating from various different sources are traded there. AA and other precursors are brought into the province along several routes: they are transported from Balochistan (Pakistan) to Bahram Chah; from the Pakistani border via Kandahar; and from the Islamic Republic of Iran via Nimroz. AA and liquid precursors such as hydrochloric acid (HCL) and ammonia are also transported into Hirat from the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkmenistan and then transported to Hilmand. Interviews conducted by MCN researchers also indicate that precursors are transported into the province directly from Nimroz. The primary destinations for precursors leaving Hilmand are Kandahar and Farah.

MCN researchers came across no reports relating to seizures of AA or other precursors in Uruzgan Province that might indicate the presence of heroin-processing laboratories there or the possibility that the area is used by traffickers as a transit point. All informants, including drug users, confirmed that there was no heroin processing or precursor trafficking in the province.
**d. Eastern Region:**

Map 19: Interprovincial movement of precursors in eastern Afghanistan

Nangarhar is home to one of the largest precursor markets (both trading and consumer) in Afghanistan. AA and other precursors are trafficked into Afghanistan from various different countries - mainly India and China - via the official crossing point at Torkham. They are also trafficked via Torkham from Pakistan, concealed among exports. AA is also trafficked across several unofficial crossing points from FATA into Nangarhar Province. A number of AA seizures indicate that traffickers are benefiting from the growing licit trade between the two countries. The precursors transported into Nangarhar are not all used within the province; some are trafficked to Takhar and Badakhshan (and to a lesser extent Balkh) in cars and trucks along the Kabul-Jalalabad road.
e. Western Region:

Map 20: Interprovincial movement of precursors in western Afghanistan

The heroin-processing industry in Farah is fed by a supply of AA and other precursors from four main destinations:

- Hilmand: Hilmand is an important supplier of precursors for heroin production in Farah. Heroin-processing laboratories in Bakwa and Gulistan Districts obtain the necessary precursors from Hilmand Province.
- Nimroz: Nimroz supplies AA and other precursors to various districts of Farah.
- Hirat: AA and other precursors are brought into Farah from Hirat primarily via the ring road.
- Islamic Republic of Iran: MCN researchers came across reports that AA was trafficked directly to Farah, concealed among licit trading materials. However, at the time of writing, the CNPA had no seizure data to confirm that AA was being trafficked directly from the Islamic Republic of Iran to Farah via the official crossing point.

In addition to the above-mentioned areas, interviewees indicated that traffickers also transported AA and other precursors into Farah from Kandahar Province via the ring road, concealed among licit goods.
Hirat also serves as an important gateway for the entry of AA and other precursors into Afghanistan - mainly from the Islamic Republic of Iran and, to a lesser extent, Turkmenistan. AA and other fluid precursors (ammonia, HCL, etc.) are also trafficked in from various other countries and regions including India, China, the Republic of Korea, Dubai, Turkey and Europe via Islam Qala. MCN researchers learned of a recent seizure by customs officers in Islam Qala that consisted of 10 tons of AA - evidence that Islam Qala is used by traffickers as an entry point into Afghanistan.

It is interesting to note that precursors tend not to enter Hirat Province via unofficial crossing points. Information provided by the DCN director indicates that Kalata Nazar Khanis the only unofficial crossing point used for precursor trafficking. Most of the precursors brought into the province are trafficked onward to other destinations within Afghanistan, while only a small amount is used by heroin-processing laboratories in Hirat. Interviews conducted by MCN researchers also indicate that the precursors leaving Hirat are transported along the ring road to a number of other provinces including Farah, Kandahar and Hilmand. Badakhshan is another important destination - precursors initially reach Kabul via the ring road and are then trafficked along the main road connecting Kunduz, Takhar and Badakhshan. Occasionally, precursors are also trafficked from Shindand District in Hirat into Farah along minor roads. Some interviewees indicated that precursors were also trafficked into Badghis and Faryab from Hirat. Researchers also found that AA was concealed among licit trading materials and labelled as antifreeze or battery acid.
VII. Adulterants

Adulterants are substances used to dilute (or cut) heroin/opium and increase its volume. Such chemicals are usually cheap and readily available on the licit market. Therefore, drug traffickers are able to significantly increase the value of their product at a low cost. In many cases, adulterants resemble heroin in appearance and in some cases they even enhance the effect of the drug.

Adulterants usually look and taste similar to opiates but are significantly cheaper, thereby presenting an extremely lucrative opportunity to traffickers. Two substances used as adulterants with heroin are paracetamol and caffeine. Heroin cutting begins at the manufacturing stage and continues until the drug reaches the consumer. Adulteration is mainly carried out in southern and western Afghanistan. The following table lists a number of adulterants, along with their origins and prices.

![Figure 4: List of adulterants used to dilute heroin/opium](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local name</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Chemical name</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Price per kg (2012)</th>
<th>Opiate type (adulterated)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Kaypin</td>
<td>Caffeine</td>
<td>Caffeine</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>$55</td>
<td>Brown heroin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Zharha masala</td>
<td>Yellow spice</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>$133</td>
<td>Crystal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Tarkha masala</td>
<td>Bitter spice</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Khwaga/Zeega masala</td>
<td>Sweet/rough spice</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Shana masala</td>
<td>Green spice</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>India/Pakistan</td>
<td>$112</td>
<td>Crystal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Anjarot</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>India/Pakistan</td>
<td>$7.70</td>
<td>Opium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Largay</td>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>$5.50</td>
<td>Opium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adulterants are used regularly in the main drug production and trafficking hubs in Kandahar, Hilmand and Nangarhar. Local information indicates that pure heroin is not available on the Kandahar market. All available heroin is adulterated and different adulterants are used to varying extents.

Given Hilmand’s position at the apex of the opiate trafficking pyramid, it is not surprising that adulterants are used extensively by drug traffickers operating in the province. MCN researchers found that many drug traffickers in Hilmand added adulterants to opiates in order to increase the quantity of drugs they could sell.

Adulterants are not commonly used to cut opium in Nangarhar, but the use of adulterants to cut heroin is very common in the province. It was difficult for researchers to establish the chemical names of those adulterants, since they tend to be known by their local names. Moreover, it is not easy to access information regarding the labels used on adulterants or the
names used for them in their countries of origin (often Pakistan, India or China). Various local names of adulterants used to cut heroin in Nangarhar are listed below:

- Kaypin (caffeine)
- Shana masala (green spice)
- Hungri masala (Hungarian spice)
- Khwaga masala (sweet spice)
- Tarkha masala (bitter spice)
VIII. Heroin-Processing Laboratories

Figure 5: Interviewees’ views on growth/decline in heroin trafficking

As indicated in the table above, the individuals interviewed believe that heroin trafficking has increased in a number of provinces over the past year. It is therefore unsurprising that heroin-processing laboratories have also become more prominent.
a. North-eastern Region:

Map 21: Heroin-processing laboratories in north-eastern Afghanistan

In Badakhshan, heroin-processing laboratories operate in a number of districts, including Darayim, Argo, Jurm, Wardoj and Kishim. There is no evidence of heroin-processing laboratories in Takhar or Kunduz, which may suggest that drug traffickers transport heroin into those provinces. The CNPA report states that Baghlan Province is also free of heroin-processing laboratories.

b. Northern Region:

Balkh Province was home to heroin-processing laboratories until 2009. However, Government officials recently informed researchers that no heroin-processing laboratories existed in the province. On the other hand, interviews with certain key informants indicated that laboratories existed in Chimal, Chahar Bolak and Sholgara Districts but were not being used on a regular basis. The interviewees also indicated that those laboratories usually produced very small amounts of heroin (2-5 kg) in each cycle and that they were moved on after a few cycles.

In Faryab Province, MCN researchers received no confirmation from Government officials as to whether heroin-processing laboratories existed in the area. Interviews with Government
officials indicated that 2-4 laboratories had been in operation until the end of 2010 in the mountainous Kohistan District. Those interviews also indicated that a heroin-processing laboratory was in operation until 2011 in Qaysar District, located near the border with Badghis Province. In 2011, it was moved to Murghab District in Badghis.

c. Southern Region:

Map 22: Heroin-processing laboratories in southern Afghanistan

Kandahar is an important province with regard to heroin processing, since all large drug trafficking networks operating in southern Afghanistan have a presence there. Since heroin-processing laboratories do not require much space, they can be set up anywhere in the province – their existence is primarily dependant on the security situation in the area, the presence of opium stocks and the availability of AA. Several districts including Maywand, Panjwayi, Ghorak, Nesh, Spin Boldak, Khakrez and Shah Wali Kot Districts have operational heroin-processing laboratories.

The security of such laboratories is maintained by drug traffickers (who have their own armed guards) and the Taliban also provide security for the entire region. The capacity of the laboratories varies, ranging between 10 and 20 kg of heroin per cycle and between 5 and 10 cycles per month. Brown heroin, white heroin and morphine are all produced in laboratories in
Kandahar. There are usually 5-8 workers employed at each laboratory, with daily workers earning around 500 Afs (US$ 10) per day while the heroin “cook” receives a monthly wage of around 51,000-76,500 Afs (US$ 1,000 -1,500). The quality of opium produced also varies according to the irrigation method used for poppy cultivation – poppy crops irrigated in the normal manner yield low-quality opium that is not always solid, while rain-fed or well-irrigated poppy crops yield high-quality opium that remains solid. The difference in quality is reflected in prices - 1 kg of rain-fed opium is US$ 50 (2550 Afs) more expensive than opium resulting from normal irrigation. Ten kg of opium resulting from normal irrigation is required to produce 1 kg of brown heroin.

According to the CNPA, small heroin-processing laboratories are present in the Balochistan border area, especially in Abdullah Khan, Pishin and Dalbandin. In some cases, heroin for local consumption is also brought in from Spin Boldak and Chaman - an indication that heroin-processing laboratories are present in Pakistan/Afghanistan border areas. However, while there is a significant presence of heroin-processing laboratories, the demolition of a number of those laboratories is a positive sign. Two prominent examples are listed below:

- 25 November 2008: The Kandahar CNPA demolished a heroin-processing laboratory in the Kokaran area of District 7, Kandahar City. They seized 8 kg of morphine, 55 kg of precursors, 22 litres of fluid opium and some heroin-processing equipment. They also detained one individual. While the demolition was a positive step, the presence of the laboratory indicates that heroin-processing laboratories are operational within Kandahar City.
- 25 December 2011: The Kandahar CNPA destroyed a heroin-processing laboratory in the village of Nagahan, Arghandab District. They seized 2 gallons of precursors, heroin-processing equipment and five stamps of heroin. Nobody was detained.

The CNPA and other information sources indicate that there are no heroin-processing laboratories in Nimroz, despite the fact that it could be considered ideally situated for accommodating such laboratories. Informants believe that the absence of laboratories is due to the fact that the province is located on flat terrain. That does not provide the traffickers with the cover they are afforded by more mountainous regions elsewhere in the country. As a result, all the heroin that enters the province originates from Kandahar, Helmand and other provinces in eastern and southern Afghanistan.

The situation is entirely different in Helmand, whose heroin-processing industry has a significant impact at national level. Laboratories are not fixed in a particular location, since changing security conditions mean that they must be moved constantly to safer areas. The province’s main heroin-processing hub has shifted over the years; it was based in Musa Qala until 2007, then in Marja until 2009. Currently, Baghran District dominates the heroin-processing industry. While laboratories are present in all districts of Helmand Province, a significant number are to be found in the northern and western districts. Based on information provided by unofficial informants, MCN researchers compiled the following list of districts in which there are a large number of laboratories:
The laboratories in Hilmand Province produce morphine, brown heroin, white heroin and crystal. Their production capacities vary between 10 and 100 kg per cycle and staff numbers vary between 5 and 30. A daily worker employed at such a laboratory earns between 500 and 750 Afghani (US$ 10-15) per day, while the heroin cook receives around 3,000 Pakistani Rupees (US$ 30 / 1500 Afghani) per kg of brown heroin and 5,000 Pakistani Rupees (US$ 50 / 2550 Afghani) per kg of crystal or white heroin produced. With regard to the basic substances required to produce different types of drugs, 10-12 kg of opium are required to produce 1 kg of high-quality morphine, 1.2 kg of morphine are required to produce 1 kg of high-quality brown heroin and 1.5 kg of morphine are required to produce 1 kg of high-quality crystal heroin. One litre of AA is required to produce 1 kg of brown heroin and 1.5 litres of AA are required to produce 1 kg of crystal heroin.

Despite a rise in opium production in Uruzgan, no heroin-processing laboratories were reported to exist in the province. All the opium produced in the province is trafficked to Kandahar and Hilmand for processing and further trafficking. There have been no seizures of AA or other precursors that would indicate the presence of hidden heroin-processing laboratories or suggest that the province lay on a transit route for trafficking into Hilmand. MCN researchers received consistent information from all sources that confirmed a complete absence of heroin processing and precursor trafficking in Uruzgan Province.
Nangarhar can be considered the birthplace of the heroin-processing industry in Afghanistan. The province became the first centre for heroin processing under the Taliban, when the Government of Pakistan destroyed and closed down heroin-processing laboratories in Khyber and Mohmand Agencies in 1996. Subsequently, the laboratories shifted from FATA to Achin and Shinwari Districts in Nangarhar Province. Achin was an important hub for heroin processing until 2006. In 2005 and 2006, most of the laboratories in Achin, Shinwari and Naziyan were destroyed by the Government, while some shifted to other areas within the province. Others moved to Hilmand in the south and Badakhshan in the north-east. At the time of writing the present report, researchers were informed that heroin-processing laboratories were located near the border, in remote areas and in certain districts. The following districts are especially notorious for heroin processing:

- Sherzad
- Achin
- Lal Pur
e. Western Region:

Farah is a significant centre for heroin processing and the province contains the highest number of laboratories in the country after Hilmand. Heroin-processing laboratories are usually located near poppy farms in extremely isolated locations, where Government control is limited. The four districts below are particularly notorious for heroin/morphine production:

- Bakwa
- Gulistan
- Bala Buluk
- Khaki Safed

In the eastern part of the province, Bakwa serves as an important heroin-production centre. One interviewee indicated that there were a significant number of heroin-processing laboratories operating in Bakwa District. Moreover, interviews with drug traffickers in Hilmand, who have a close relationship with the Taliban, indicate that the number of laboratories in Bakwa is probably higher than estimated, that they are all registered with the Taliban and that each laboratory provides the Taliban with 28,000-56,000 Afs (US$ 550-1,100) per month.
In Hirat, information provided by Government officials did not confirm the presence of heroin-processing laboratories in the province, but it did indicate that until 2-3 years ago heroin-processing laboratories existed in Shindand, Kohsan and Herat City. Other informants told researchers that they were still present in the following districts:

- Ghoryan
- Kushk (Rubat-e-Sangi)
- Kushki Kuhna
- Kohsan
- Shindand
- Gulran

No information was available regarding the total number of laboratories, their production capacities or the wages earned by staff.

In Badghis, information provided by Government officials indicates that there are no active heroin-processing laboratories in the province. According to the Badghis CNPA, while several districts contain the infrastructure required by heroin-processing laboratories, none of it is operational. The Badghis CNPA believes that until 2-3 years ago, there were heroin/morphine-processing laboratories in the following locations:

- Murghab District
- Panj Bus village, Qadis District
- Dara-e-Bum village, Jawand District

Researchers received confirmation from a senior official in Hirat of the existence of heroin/morphine-processing laboratories in Jawand and Murghab Districts. Interviewees also indicated that laboratories could be present in Qadis. A number of interviewees in Hirat also told researchers that in the recent past, morphine was being trafficked into Hirat from Badghis, thus implying the presence of heroin-processing laboratories in Badghis or Faryab. There were no seizures of AA or other precursors in Badghis, but that may well reflect the poor law-enforcement capacity of the authorities and the insecurity prevailing in the province, rather than an absence of precursors.
IX. Opium Stocks

The inherent uncertainty of the drug trade ensures that many people involved in it maintain their own stocks of opium. As the chart below illustrates, a majority of interviewees believe that opium stocks exist within the country. Often, opium stocks are held with a view to sell them later for a large profit, if for any reason prices rise. In some cases, traffickers also maintain stocks in order to hedge the risk of seizure or damage to shipments.

Figure 6: Do you think opium stocks are present in Afghanistan? (Percentage of total respondents)

An interesting point relating to opiate stocks within Afghanistan is the quantity held by the various participants in the drug trade. As the table below illustrates, major traffickers are thought to hold the largest quantities, while farmers hold the least.

Figure 7: Average amount of opium stocked in Afghanistan by different groups (Average of interviewees’ responses)
As illustrated in Figure 8, with the exception of a small number of provinces such as Bamyan and Parwan, interviewees in most provinces believe that opium stocks are present in their provinces.

Figure 8: Are opium stocks present in the province? (Percentage of total responses in each province)
a. North-eastern Region:

Map 25: Opium stocks in north-eastern Afghanistan

Opium stocks are held in several districts in Badakhshan Province, including Argo, Darayim, Tishkan and Wardoj. There are no opium stocks in Takhar or Kunduz; most opium is trafficked in from Badakhshan, Baghlan and Nangarhar Provinces. The minimal poppy cultivation in Baghlan suggests that there are no opium stocks held in the province.
b. Northern Region:

Map 26: Opium stocks in northern Afghanistan

In 2011, opium was cultivated in all the northern provinces. Balkh still contains opium stocks, although their volume has decreased in recent years. Opium is transported into the province from other northern provinces and MCN researchers believe that stocks may be present in the following districts:

- Chimtal
- Balkh
- Sholgara
- Chahar Bolak

There are no opium stocks in Jawzjan, since opium production in the province has been relatively low in recent years and local demand is met through trafficking from other provinces. Opium stocks are present in Faryab but not in significant quantities.
c. Southern Region:

Map 28: Opium stocks in southern Afghanistan

Opium stocks exist in several locations in Kandahar Province and can be stored for 5-6 years without their quality being affected. Farmers and traders hold stocks of opium in varying quantities. Usually the stocks are kept at room temperature in wooden or metal boxes and wrapped in plastic or poppy leaves. However, owing to the threat of detection, most people currently hold stocks underground in plastic barrels or in other hiding places such as water tanks. Since opium is damaged by sun, it is kept away from sunlight for long periods. Opium stocks exist in all districts of Kandahar, especially Maywand, Nesh, Panjwayi and Spin Boldak.

Morphine stocks also exist in the province but they are not kept underground. Morphine can be stored for 2-3 years and is held primarily so that it can be easily transported later or processed in case of urgent demands from drug traffickers. Maywand and Panjwayi Districts contain a significant number of morphine stocks.

In Nimroz, MCN researchers were informed by official and unofficial sources that a number of opium and heroin stocks existed in the province, particularly in the following districts:

- Chahar Burjak
• Kang
• Khash Rod
• Zaranj

In Hilmand Province, farmers and traders maintain stocks of opium and morphine in all districts. Large stocks of opium are held in plastic water tanks and other plastic containers underground. Morphine and opium stocks also exist at the border with Balochistan. While farmers hold stocks of around 15-50 kg, minor opium traders stock around 250-500 kg and major drug traffickers stock up to 5 tons of opium, distributed over various different locations. In general, drug traffickers divide their stocks into three parts. At any given moment:

• One part is reaching its final destination
• One part is en route to its final destination
• One part is held in stock

In Uruzgan, poppy cultivation reached a record high in 2011 and it is expected that the record will be surpassed in 2012. Opium stocks are present in all districts and farmers and opium traders are able to stock the drug for 3-7 years before it becomes damaged. However, it is not common for opium to be stored underground in the province. Furthermore, opium traders in Uruzgan do not hold large quantities of opium in one place, since there is a risk that they will be targeted by law-enforcement agencies. Instead, they choose to hold stocks at relatives’ and friends’ houses. Within the province, Dihrawud, Charchino and Gizab Districts are the main locations of opium stocks.
Opium has been cultivated in Nangarhar for a long time. The interviewees indicated that opium stocks are present in several districts of Nangarhar province including Sherzad, Khogyani, Achin, Nazyan and Lal Pur.
e. Western Region:

Map 30: Opium stocks in western Afghanistan

Since Hirat is not a major opium producer, there are no significant opium stocks in the province. Shindand District may contain some stocks, since poppy cultivation regularly takes place there. In addition, temporary stocks are sometimes present in the border districts before being trafficked onward to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The situation is entirely different in Farah, where large opium stocks exist in all opium-producing districts. Farmers and minor and major drug traffickers all maintain stocks of opium, and Bakwa District is a prominent location for those stocks. Stocks can be maintained for 5-10 years, except in hot regions where they cannot be held for such long periods.

There are no opium stocks in Ghor Province, since there has been minimal opium production there for the past four years. Opium stocks may be held on a temporary basis. In Badghis, researchers concluded that opiate stocks were present but not in large quantities.
X. Drug Trafficking Networks

As the present report has made clear, Afghanistan is home to an extensive drug industry. The drug industry involves various processes: obtaining precursors, extracting opium, processing it into heroin/morphine and trafficking it onward – activities that require an equally extensive network of traffickers. Researchers found that such networks existed in each province they visited (see Maps 31 and 32). The number of trafficking networks and the links they have with other networks varies between provinces.

Map 31: Estimated major drug trafficking networks in Afghanistan
The results of the research study do not indicate a direct link between any particular tribe and drug traffickers in the various different provinces (see Figure 9), except perhaps in Kandahar, Nangarhar, Hilmand and Farah.
Figure 9: Are the drug traffickers linked to a particular tribe? (Percentage of total responses in each province)

a. **Northern Region:**

Drug traffickers in Faryab maintain links with traffickers in three regions - western Afghanistan (Badghis, Ghor and Hirat Provinces), southern Afghanistan (Hilmand and Nimroz Provinces) and northern Afghanistan (Sari Pul, Jawzjan and Balkh Provinces).

Researchers found that in Jawzjan, drug traffickers had links with all tribes existing in the province. Aqcha District is an important hub for traffickers; opiates enter Aqcha before being distributed to various destinations within and outside the province. Aqcha is controlled by Pashtun traffickers, while Khamyab and Qarqin Districts are controlled by Turkmen traffickers, who have strong linguistic and tribal links to Turkmenistan.

b. **Southern Region:**

Hilmand maintains the busiest network in country and thousands of drug traffickers operate within the province. Traffickers in Hilmand have links to networks in all other provinces, with the exception of Badakhshan. Certain members of the Ishaqzai, Noorzai, Alizai and Baluch tribes are active participants in Hilmand’s opiate trade.

c. **Eastern Region:**

Given the long history of drug trafficking in Nangarhar, it is unsurprising that traffickers operating in the province have active links with networks around the country. Traffickers are especially active in north-eastern Afghanistan, and maintain links with their counterparts in western and southern Afghanistan.
**d. Western Region:**

A number of drug traffickers are active in Herat City, and traffickers based in southern and western Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran all play a significant part in the drug trade in Herat Province. Drug traffickers based in northern and eastern Afghanistan also have a presence in the province. All informants interviewed in Herat stated that certain officials and former warlords were also involved in drug trafficking there.

Extensive trade links between Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the fact that transit vehicles carry licit goods cross the border on a regular basis, facilitates drug trafficking between the two countries. Key informants told MCN researchers that certain members of the Afghanistan and Iranian security forces could also have links with drug traffickers (both Iranian and Afghan) operating in the border districts of Herat. It is particularly difficult for drug traffickers to operate without the cooperation of Iranian law enforcement officials, since the Iranian border is very well guarded in most areas. In Herat, researchers also had the impression that prominent drug traffickers had established an understanding with certain Iranian law enforcement officials, allowing drugs to be transported into the Islamic Republic of Iran before being trafficked onward to Turkey.

Hilmand-based drug traffickers are also actively involved in the drug trade in Farah, which is known to be a significant heroin producer. Interviews with informants indicated that there was a possibility that some law-enforcement officials aided opiate trafficking to and from the province. The situation is similar in Ghor - there are a number of opium traders operating in the province, but it is the drug traffickers operating in Hilmand that are responsible for transit trade from Badghis and Faryab Provinces.

Several drug trafficking networks exist in Badghis, most of which fall under one of three categories:

- **Government/official networks:** Include some former warlords and police officials. A number of traffickers hold or have held senior posts in the Government and wield significant influence over the authorities. One example of such influence is the use of police vehicles to transport opiates.
- **Pro-Taliban drug traffickers’ networks:** Include a number of Taliban commanders and local people living in Taliban-controlled areas. Such networks are only active in Taliban-controlled areas, as is the drug trade that they conduct.
- **Neutral drug traffickers’ networks:** Such drug traffickers have links with both Government officials and the Taliban, which are maintained by cash payments to both parties.

As is the case in Ghor, drug traffickers based in Hilmand are actively involved in the drug trade in Badghis. Furthermore, drug traffickers operating in Badghis maintain links with their counterparts in the northern, western and southern parts of the country. All respondents stated that those drug traffickers were not linked to any Jihadi party.
XI. AGE/Taliban Involvement in the Drug Trade

The Taliban and AGE maintain a close relationship with drug traffickers around Afghanistan. The nature of their involvement in the opiate trade (providing security, providing transport, collecting taxes, etc.) varies between regions and provinces.

Figure 10: Do the Taliban tax farmers, heroin-processing laboratory owners and traffickers?

As the figures above and below indicate, most people interviewed during the course of the research study believe that the Taliban levy taxes on those involved in the drug trade (poppy farmers, heroin-processing laboratory owners and traffickers). In many cases, that takes the form of Ushar (Islamic tax). Legal products are also taxed.

Figure 11: Do the Taliban tax farmers, heroin-processing laboratory owners and traffickers?
(Percentage of total responses in each province)
Taliban involvement in the drug trade is not limited to collecting taxes – a number of respondents also believe that the Taliban are directly involved in heroin processing and other elements of the drug trade.

**Figure 12: Are the Taliban directly involved in heroin processing and trade?**

(Percentage of total responses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>83.4</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The only area of the Afghan drug trade that the Taliban appear not to be involved in is the transportation of AA and other precursors. Most of the people that spoke with researchers believe that the Taliban are not involved in the transportation of precursors.

**Figure 13: Do the Taliban transport AA and opiates from one destination to another?**

(Percentage of total responses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>83.4</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, interviewees do believe that those involved in the drug trade provide resources to the Taliban, including arms, vehicles and bullets.

**Figure 14: Do drug traffickers provide assistance to the Taliban?**

(Percentage of total responses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arms</td>
<td>91.3</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullets</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**a. North-eastern Region:**

In Badakhshan Province, the Taliban do not control drug trafficking but they do provide security to heroin-processing laboratories and encourage farmers to cultivate poppy crops. Researchers were also informed of an announcement by the Taliban declaring that if farmers did not
cultivate poppy crops, they would be obliged to pay a surcharge of 50,000 Afs (US$ 1,000). The Taliban do not control the border areas in which most trafficking occurs but in areas they do control, drug traffickers provide them with cash. They also manufacture weapons for the Taliban and other AGE. In the areas under their control, the Taliban levy Ushar on poppy crops and other licit products.

In Takhar and Kunduz, the Taliban do not control the drug trafficking network. Instead, they support traffickers and tax them for that support. The situation is the same in Baghlan Province, where the Taliban’s role is limited to supporting drug traffickers.

b. Northern Region:

In Balkh, drug trafficking occurs primarily in border areas that are not controlled by the Taliban. In areas that are dominated by the Taliban, traffickers support them by providing cash, clothes and food. However, the Taliban are not directly involved in drug trade or transportation. Ushar is levied at 10 per cent on poppy crops and other licit products and Zakat (another Islamic tax) is levied at 2.5 per cent on animal husbandry (from owners of sheep and goats).

In Faryab, the Taliban levy Ushar and Zakat but lack a central command structure. Each group controls specific areas and does not have any control in other areas. That is also true for other AGE, who also levy taxes, while the lack of security in the province makes illegal activities very lucrative.

In Jawzjan, the Taliban are active in three districts, two of which are known for opium production. Again, they are not directly involved in the drug trade but they levy Ushar and Zakat.

c. Southern Region:

The situation differs in southern Afghanistan, where the Taliban play a direct role in the drug trade. In Kandahar, MCN researchers found that in areas where the Taliban had a presence, poppy cultivation and heroin processing were initiated easily; a more significant Taliban presence implies greater insecurity in the region and more opium production. Not only do the Taliban collect Ushar (at 10 per cent) on the proceeds from opium and other legal agricultural products, but farmers also provide food to Taliban groups in their villages.

Drug traffickers also provide the Taliban with arms, ammunition, cars and trucks, motorbikes, clothes and food. The Taliban collect tax from laboratory owners on a monthly basis (the amount varies) while some drug traffickers pay regular salaries to Taliban insurgents. Their primary role is to ensure safe transport in Taliban-controlled areas and does not involve the transportation of opiates or precursors. Information from the head of the CNPA indicates that certain Taliban commanders (such as Mula Qayum Zakir) are directly involved in opiate and AA trade.
In Nimroz, the Taliban do not control the drug trade but they support it. The 2010 attack on the CNPA office by two terrorists is one example of such collaboration. Drug traffickers support the Taliban with cash and weapons, thereby allowing the Taliban to render the area insecure. Farmers contribute by paying Ushar to the Taliban.

In Hilmand, opium production and trade are the main sources of funding for Taliban insurgents. However, the Taliban do not appear to have a significant influence on the AA and precursor trade. They levy Ushar on opium as well as on licit crops and are paid by all heroin-processing laboratory owners on a monthly basis. Information obtained from interviews with drug traffickers indicates that in Baghran District, each laboratory owner pays around 100,000-150,000 Pakistani Rupees (US$ 1,050-1,550 / 53,500-79,000 Afs) to the Taliban. All drug traffickers provide cash to the Taliban or support them by contributing arms, ammunition, clothes, food, motorbikes and other vehicles. Some large drug trafficking groups go as far as to cover all the costs of selected Taliban groups and pay monthly salaries to Taliban insurgents. Furthermore, some Taliban commanders are directly involved in the opiate trade and run their own heroin-processing laboratories in areas that they control. In such cases, commanders often keep the profits they make, rather than contributing them to Taliban funds.

The Taliban also have direct links with the opium cultivation industry and opiate trade in Uruzgan Province. Ushar is levied by the Taliban on opium cultivation in all districts of the province, and legal crops are also taxed in some areas. Researchers found that the Taliban had strong links with drug traffickers operating in areas under their control. Opium traders in such areas provide the Taliban with clothes, food and cash, along with arms and ammunition. The Taliban facilitate the transportation of opium to Hilmand Province and in some areas also store opium for drug traffickers before it is trafficked onward.

d. **Eastern Region:**

The Taliban and other AGE do not derive significant benefits from poppy cultivation and drug trafficking in Nangarhar. Researchers were informed that the Taliban collected Ushar (at 10 per cent) from poppy farmers in Sherzad, Khogyani and Chaparhar Districts. There were no reports from other districts. In Sherzad, heroin-processing laboratory owners pay a monthly tax to the Taliban (around US$ 500-1,000 / 25,500-51,000 Afs). Researchers did not come across any reports that the Taliban were involved in the drug or precursor trade in eastern Afghanistan.

e. **Western Region:**

In Badghis, the Taliban benefit from opium production and opiate trafficking in areas under their control. In such areas, they collect Ushar from all farmers who cultivate poppy crops and also receive a (unknown) monthly payment from drug traffickers. Some Taliban commanders are also directly involved in the opiate trade. The Taliban are also involved in transporting
opium from Badghis to Ghor and Hilmand Provinces. However, informants were unable to provide any estimates with regard to the fees charged for such transportation.

In Hirat, opium production and trafficking provide the main sources of revenue for the Taliban. The Taliban collect Ushar (at 10 per cent) from poppy farmers in areas under their control. According to a senior CNPA official, the Taliban announced that in 2012 they would collect 20 per cent of the total opium produced and would, in return, protect farms from Government-led eradication efforts. That did not materialize, however, as the poppy crop developed a disease and the Taliban were not able to significantly enrich their funds. All drug traffickers operating in Taliban-controlled areas are expected to make payments to the Taliban; the exact amount varies for each trafficker.

Farah is similar to Hirat in that opium production, heroin processing and opiate trafficking provide the main sources of funding for Taliban operating in the province. The Taliban collect Ushar (at 10 per cent) from poppy farmers in most areas of Farah. The Taliban announced that they would levy a 20 per cent tax on opium production, but that did not occur since the poppy crop was severely damaged by disease. Owners of heroin-processing laboratories also pay a tax to the Taliban in Taliban-controlled areas. In addition, the Taliban transport opiates between Bala Buluk and Khaki Safed Districts and also to various destinations in Nimroz Province. Informants were not aware of the amount the Taliban charged for that service. Researchers also found that certain Taliban commanders were directly involved in opiate trade and heroin processing in the province.

The security situation in Ghor suffers from the fact that the province is located near three unstable provinces - Hilmand, Farah and Badghis. AGE and the Taliban are therefore able to infiltrate Ghor Province easily. Despite the easy access, their activities in the province are limited.
XII. Hawala

_Hawala_ (also known as _hundi_) is an ancient money-transfer system that traces its origins to South Asia. Relying heavily on trust and connections such as family relationships, the _hawala_ system has come to be used in several parts of the world, including Afghanistan. As is the case with any other remittance system, _hawala_ can be - and is - used to launder money and support anti-Government activities.

In order to understand the _hawala_ system in Afghanistan, MCN researchers interviewed several key informants (mainly _hawaladars_) across the 18 provinces covered during the research project. The responses obtained from those interviews provided all information included in the present section of the report.

**Map 33: Estimated registered _hawaladars_ in Afghanistan**

While most Afghans are new to the modern banking system, it is perhaps unsurprising to note that _hawala_ has a significant presence in the country (see Maps 33 and 34). The informal nature of _hawala_, a lack of strict law enforcement to prevent misuse of the system and the close-knit
nature of Afghan society mean that the Taliban and other AGE can use hawala to bypass legal regulations. The chances of regulations not being enforced, and consequently of the system being abused, increase significantly in the case of unregistered hawaladars. As Map 34 illustrates, a significant number of hawaladars are not registered.

Map 34: Estimated unregistered hawaladars in Afghanistan

While hawala differs from the modern-day banking system in several ways, there are a number of similarities, including a clear difference between the major and minor players in the industry, both official and unofficial. The more prominent the hawaladar, the more money and networks he/she will be able to access. Similarly, the threat posed to the government by rogue hawaladars also depends on the size of the organization behind them.
The amount of money received from the *hawala* system varies from province to province, but interviews conducted by MCN researchers indicate that Nimroz receives the largest amount of incoming transfers. Among all the provinces covered by the research study, Ghor and Badghis appear to receive the smallest daily incoming amounts from *hawala*.

*Figure 15: Estimated average daily incoming transfers in each province in the *hawala* system*
With regard to outgoing money, interviewees believe that Kunduz and Farah are the most prominent provinces, while Ghor and Badghis once again have the least significant involvement in the *hawala* industry.

*Figure 16: Estimated average daily outgoing transfers in each province in the *hawala* system*
Since a significant proportion of the interviewees believe that hawaladars work with drug traffickers (see Figure 17), it is clear that the threat to the system through misuse is serious.

**Figure 17: Do you think drug traffickers use the hawala system?**
(Percentage of all responses)

That tallies with information obtained relating to how the hawala system is used, with interviewees indicating that several hawaladars transfer money without maintaining records in accordance with regulations. It is interesting to note that a number of drug traffickers also operate legal businesses. According to interviewees, that allows traffickers to approach the hawaladars in a legal manner and still transfer funds generated from drug trafficking.

**Figure 18: Different methods of using the hawala system (Percentage of all responses)**
The origin of the money circulating in the hawala system is another indicator of the relationship between the illicit drug trade and the hawaladars. Kabul, as the capital city, is a plausible source of funds. Kandahar, Hilmand, Balkh, Nimroz and Hirat – other prominent sources of hawala money according to interviewees - all have a significant drug trafficking industry.

The situation is the same with regard to the destination of the money circulating in the hawala system. Interviews conducted by MCN researchers indicate that Kabul is once again a significant presence but that Kandahar, Hilmand, and Balkh also feature prominently. While statistics do not offer conclusive evidence of a link between drug traffickers and hawaladars, they do indicate a possible connection.

Figure 19: Estimated types of incoming transfers
(Average percentage of all responses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Remittances</th>
<th>Debt</th>
<th>Goods</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Badakhshan</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badghis</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baghlan</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balkh</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bamyan</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farah</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faryab</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghor</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helmand</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herat</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jawzjan</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandahar</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunduz</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nangarhar</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nemroz</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takhar</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uruzgan</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The nature of the remittances varies from province to province, with interviewees indicating that money remains within the hawala system in several provinces while in others the hawaladars are willing to act as money lenders.
With regard to the foreign countries that serve as either sources or destinations for money available to Afghan hawaladars, it is unsurprising that those neighbouring Afghanistan dominate. Interviewees indicated that the Islamic Republic of Iran was the most significant source, along with Pakistan. The Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, among others, are viewed as less significant sources. With regard to the destinations of money leaving Afghanistan via the hawala system, interviewees once again indicated that the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan were the most prominent, while India, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan also featured to a lesser extent. According to interviewees, most hawaladars operating outside Afghanistan are Afghan.

There is also a perception among those interviewed during the survey that the hawaladars in Helmand and Kandahar pay taxes to AGE – another link in the chain that connects drug trafficking with the hawala system. It is important to note that the research study also suggests that hawaladars in Badakhshan, Kunduz, Takhar and certain other provinces do not pay any taxes to AGE, despite a flourishing drug trade in those provinces.

Interviews conducted by the MCN researchers also indicate that as the modern banking system was beginning to develop in Afghanistan, the hawala system weakened. A majority of interviewees indicated that the growth of the formal banking system in the country was directly responsible for a reduction in the use of the hawala system.
The inherent shortcomings and advantages of the hawala system are clearly illustrated in Figure 22. The faster speed at which the money can be transferred will be a significant reason for the growth of organizations such as Western Union and will force hawaladars to find a solution.

However, organizations such as Western Union will not be viewed by drug traffickers and other AGE as preferred partners. Figure 23 summarizes the advantages and disadvantages of using such international organizations, as perceived by interviewees. Clearly, the speed at which money is transferred gives the international companies a significant edge over the hawaladars. At the same time, interviewees also indicated that the regulatory mechanism within the
country remained relatively lax (see Figure 23), and as long as that remains the case, it is likely that drug traffickers and AGE will ensure that the hawala system survives.

Figure 23: Regulatory mechanism in the central bank

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of regulatory mechanism in the central bank</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regulatory system in place including a separate suspicious hawala book</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulatory system not applied by all hawaladars</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan Bank can and does check hawaladars' records</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaladars submit records to the Central Bank</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Comment / Do not know</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Security Department wants to impose controls</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No System in place</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most interviewees also indicated that the relationship between Afghan and foreign hawaladars has been enhanced by increased Internet access within the country (Figure 24).

Figure 24: Afghan hawaladars’ methods of communicating with foreign hawaladars
(Percentage of all responses)
At the same time, the nature of their clients and climatic conditions in the country mean that the *hawaladars* are most active in the spring and summer (see Figure 25). That also corresponds to harvest season for opium poppy and other crops in Afghanistan.

The commission charged by the *hawaladars* will prove an important factor in their competition with more formal banking. While the percentages depicted in Figure 26 reflect the current views of interviewees, it is probable that those percentages will change over time to keep the *hawaladars* competitive.
Most importantly, it is drug traffickers and legal traders (some of whom are also drug traffickers) that are driving the hawala system in Afghanistan. As the interviewees indicated (Figure 27), until drug traffickers are eliminated and banking regulations are strictly enforced, hawala will continue to play a role in Afghanistan.
XIII. Conclusion

The research indicates clear patterns in the movement of opiates across Afghanistan. While opiates pass through all the provinces covered by the survey, production and trafficking to foreign countries is clearly more significant in certain provinces (such as Hilmand, Kandahar and Hirat) than in others. A strong Taliban/AGE presence, lack of security, large-scale poppy cultivation and the presence of geographical features that allow concealment from the authorities are common to most provinces with a flourishing drug trade. Similar trends are observable with regard to the movements of AA and other precursors within the country.

Adulterants are used by drug traffickers, especially in Hilmand, Kandahar and Nangarhar, to boost profits. The drug trade in Afghanistan has also resulted in the establishment of several heroin-processing laboratories across the country. Those are usually located in areas with significant poppy cultivation and easy access to precursors; Badakhshan is the one prominent exception. The uncertainty inherent to the drug trade also means that drug traffickers maintain stocks of opium. Research indicates that the largest quantities are stocked by major traffickers.

Among the provinces in which the drug trade is prominent, the research study indicates a clear relationship between the illicit drug trade and AGE activities. From the protection of opium crops from Government detection to the collection of Ushall and drug trafficking, AGE play a significant role in the drug trade in Afghanistan. Afghanistan appears to be an obvious example of how illicit drug trade (cultivation, refining and trafficking) can fund political violence, and vice-versa.

With regard to funds and their movement within and outside the country, research on the hawala system offers another reminder of the many challenges faced by Afghanistan. Despite the presence of legislation and regulations aimed at preventing the system from being abused, interviewees believe that their implementation is severely lacking. The arrival of new technologies and global companies is the main silver lining in the situation, but as the research shows, those new developments will take time to embed themselves into Afghan society.
XIV. Recommendations

In light of the information received from officials and key informants interviewed during the research study and also from the reports filed by MCN researchers, MCN proposes the following recommendations to counter the threat posed by the drug trade in Afghanistan:

a) Develop and implement policies at provincial and national level that incentivize the cultivation of legal crops over opium poppy.

b) Ensure that local law-enforcement offices coordinate with their counterparts within and outside each province so that information on drug trafficking routes and methods remains up-to-date.

c) Promote joint operations involving law enforcement officials from different provinces. Welcome the cooperation of experts from international organisations such as the United Nations.

d) Develop and implement effective regulatory measures to increase accountability and prevent the misuse of the *hawala* system by drug traffickers.

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