UNODC Drugs Monitoring Platform Brief:

Patterns and trends in trafficking routes of heroin and methamphetamine originating in Afghanistan

May 2022
Heroin and methamphetamine seizures increased in terms of the number of shipments and seizure weights over the course of 2020-2021.

Methamphetamine maritime seizures grew from late 2020 into 2021 as did seizure events in the Near and Middle East.
Seizure events suggest an eastward and southward intensification in trafficking out of Afghanistan including the traditional westward movement through the Balkan route.

Seizure events suggest increased trafficking into Southern India, Sri Lanka, and East and Southern Africa between 2018 to 2021 for both heroin and methamphetamine. Seizure events also indicate an increase in maritime seizures of heroin in the Indian Ocean or Arabian Sea from 2021 onwards.
Introduction

Building on earlier efforts of the UNODC Drugs Monitoring Platform, this brief examines dimensions of seizure event data to enable early assessments of possible changes in trafficking patterns. 1

This analysis is based on select countries situated along the southern route in East and Southern Africa and along the Balkan, Caucasus, and northern routes, particularly observations within 2,000 km of Afghanistan. The specific intention is to reflect the platform’s attributes by focusing on trafficking in heroin and methamphetamine from Afghanistan, a major source of illegally produced drugs.

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1 The analysis contained here is based on a continually updated set of individual drug seizure data captured by the Drugs Monitoring Platform. The Drugs Monitoring Platform and its analytical outputs aim at providing knowledge based on a constantly evolving and expanding dataset, bearing in mind that several data caveats should be considered (see Scope and limitations of the data used in the analysis).