

CRIMJUST - Criminal Network Disruption Global Programme

The Afghan Opiate Trade Project (AOTP)

Concept Note

[Launch of the Report on Afghan Women and the Opiate Trade](#)

Date: 7 November 2022 **Time:** 14:30-15:45 (Vienna Time Zone)

Venue: VIC, Board Room D, Floor 4, C Building

Platform: Microsoft Teams

Language: English

Objective:

The objective of this launch is to present the findings of the UNODC report on Afghan women and the opiate trade and to provide an opportunity for a dialogue on the current level of understanding of Afghan women's experiences, as well as the research gaps and policy implications.

Background

For nearly two decades, Afghanistan has been the major source of the world's illicit opium production. Opiates produced in Afghanistan impact governance and economic development and continue to fuel insurgency, terrorism, corruption and poor health, within Afghanistan, the southwest Asia region and further afield. The trafficking of illicit opiates contributes to the destabilization of Afghanistan and countries along the main trafficking routes. While there has been considerable research on opiate production in Afghanistan, there are few detailed studies on how opiate manufacture or trafficking occurs in Afghanistan, and no dedicated study on women's involvement in these areas. In 2020, UNODC produced a report based on interviews with active male Afghan drug traffickers – *Quchaqbar* in Dari/Farsi – who were directly involved in the trafficking of opiates in Afghanistan and abroad. All of those interviewed in the 2020 study were men. Accessing women traffickers – or *Quchaqbar zan* in Dari- in the cultural environment of Afghanistan was challenging, and the initial assumption was that women had little role to play in the opiate trade, beyond cultivating and harvesting opium and anecdotal evidence of female drug mules. However, in the 2020 study, many male traffickers commented that Afghan women's involvement in the opiate trade had increased in the five years from 2015 to 2020, and that women performed many roles in the business.

To better understand the role of Afghan women in opiate trade in Afghanistan and following the publication of the "*Voices of Quchaqbar*" report, the UNODC's Afghan Opiate Trade Project, under the framework of CRIMJUST initiated the current study, utilising a similar methodology to interview Afghan women. This study investigates Afghan women's role and involvement in the drug trade, motivations for entering and remaining in the drug trade, the business model and drug trafficking networks.

Methodology:

The launch will be held in a hybrid format. The main event will take place in person in Vienna, with online participation also available. UNODC will provide attendees with access to a video-conferencing platform. The event will be held in English and will have a duration of one hour and a half.

Audience:

- Permanent Missions

- A representative from Global Illicit Flows Programme including: AIRCOP, SEACOP, Global Firearms Programme, CORMS, COLIBRI.
- UNODC Office for Afghanistan, CARICC, ROCA
- CRIMJUST partners
- Non-Profit Organisations and Academia
- AOTP partners

Agenda

The session will involve introductory presentations or speeches by the speakers (some presentations will be online).

Interventions from the floor are encouraged through questions and comments directly linked to the subject

Total session time: 75 minutes

- Welcome and introduction by the moderator: 2 minutes
- Keynote speech by speakers (2-5 minutes per speaker): 40 minutes
- Presentation of studies' key findings: 20 minutes
- Questions from participants: 10 minutes
- Closing of side-event by the moderator: 2 minutes
- Overflow time 5 minutes

Moderator:

Mr. Michael Osman, Head, Afghan Opiate Trade Project, Border Management Branch, UNODC

Speakers:

- Mr. Alan Cole, Chief, Border Management Branch, UNODC
- Representative, Research and Trend Analysis Branch, UNODC (tbc)
- Representative INL – tbc
- Representative NGO - tbc
- Representative UNODC Country Office for Afghanistan - tbc
- Representative UNODC Gender Team – tbc
- Representative UN Women – tbc

Introduction, overview of the study and presentation of the key findings

- Mr. Michael Osman, Head, Afghan Opiate Trade Project, Border Management Branch, UNODC
- Ms. Monika Roszkowska, Research Officer, Afghan Opiate Trade Project, Border Management Branch, UNODC

Expected Outcomes

- Provide an intersectional analysis of the role of women in opiate trade in Afghanistan
- Shedding light on the unique conditions and challenges faced by women.
- Provide insights on key findings on Afghan women's role and involvement in the drug trade, motivations for entering and remaining in the drug trade, the business model and drug trafficking networks.

Sustainable Development Goals

This initiative contributes to CRIMJUST's work towards the achievement of SDG 16 "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions". It is built upon the understanding that the development of just, peaceful and inclusive societies is partly contingent on criminal justice systems serving, and being accountable to, all of its citizens.

In line with CRIMJUST's commitment to contribute to SDG5, "*Gender equality and women's empowerment*", this launch and report will serve a) to raise awareness around the unique challenges faced by women involved in organized crime, and b) to counter gender stereotypes and bias in criminal justice responses.