

Background Guide



United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Topic A: Addressing the Proliferation of Fentanyl-Laced Counterfeit Drugs
Through Organized Crime Networks

Topic B: Combating Organ Trafficking From Underdeveloped Countries

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TAEMUN IX

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Greetings Delegates,

My name is Colin Stephens and I am a director of the UNODC at TAEMUN IXI. I am currently a sophomore at Thomas A. Edison High School. When not in school, I spend my time rock climbing, doing astrophotography, and DJing. I have lived in Djibouti, Mexico, Hungary, and here in the United States. I have also visited many countries across the world and have experienced various cultures worldwide. I am looking forward to TAEMUN and hope it will be an excellent experience for all of you.

Best regards,

Colin Stephens

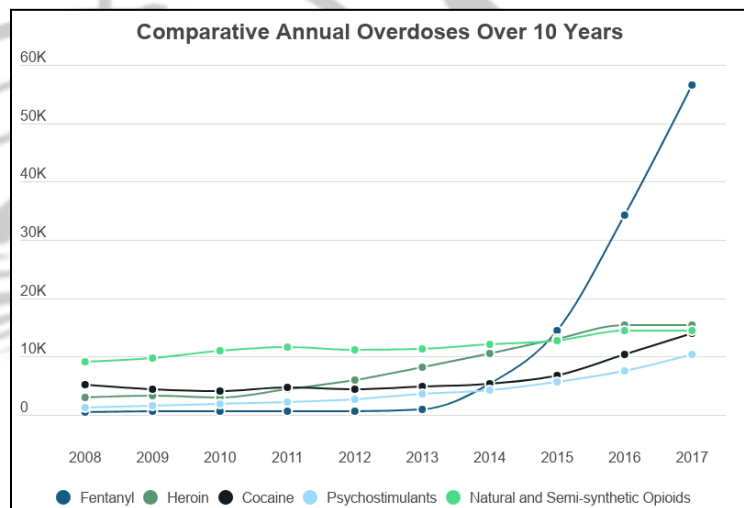
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Topic A: Addressing the Proliferation of Fentanyl-Laced Counterfeit Drugs Through Organized Crime Networks

Background:

Fentanyl is an extremely potent drug that was originally developed as a painkiller and is 50 times more potent than Heroin. Despite its originally intended use, fentanyl is often illegally spread and due to its high potency, causes 70 percent of all overdose deaths in the United States of America. Fentanyl is responsible for the vast majority of overdoses worldwide and is significantly more toxic than other drugs. Fentanyl activates the reward centers in your brain to trigger the release of endorphins and in doing so, becomes addictive. Fentanyl is most often produced in China and smuggled into other countries through organized crime networks. In the United States, for example, fentanyl is smuggled in through two main cartels, the Sinaloa cartel and the Jalisco Nueva Generación cartel. Fentanyl is exclusively made in laboratories, unlike other opioids, which are made from poppy seeds.



Illegal fentanyl is made in powder form and is easy to add to other drugs. Powder fentanyl is often added to more expensive drugs such as heroin, which can increase profits for drug dealers. This can lead to an overdose given the extraordinary potency of fentanyl. Since the money generated from criminal fentanyl sales is illegal, street sales of fentanyl requires money laundering to prevent detection from law enforcement.. Large organized crime groups often use highly sophisticated money laundering methods that are difficult to detect. Additionally, cyber

currency, such as bitcoin, is often how these drugs are paid for to remain undetectable.

Combating the opioid crisis is expensive and has cost the United States of America alone \$1,000,000,000,000.

Current Situation:

Current attempts to stop illegal fentanyl have been unsuccessful to date. In 2017, Chinese law enforcement shut down 1700 online vendors, arrested 21000 people, and seized over 60 tons of controlled narcotics. However, these efforts are not enough and fentanyl is still incredibly prevalent and the leading cause of overdoses worldwide. In an attempt to combat the fentanyl crisis the United States government established multiple executive orders to stop the proliferation of fentanyl through organized crime. Despite these efforts, fentanyl remains widespread. It is cheaper to produce and more powerful than other drugs such as heroin. This cost makes it a natural point for addicts who have gained tolerance to less powerful drugs, leading to increasing dependence and eventually, overdose. There is concern that fentanyl may entirely replace other illegal drugs in countries such as Australia, where there is a large heroin-addicted population. If Australia's main provider of heroin, Myanmar, were to reduce production, many of those users would switch to fentanyl. This is already happening in many parts of the world with fentanyl replacing other drugs and causing disproportionate amounts of overdoses.

Past UN Actions:

In the past, the UNODC has launched measures to try to stop this crisis, including its 2018 Opioid Strategy. This policy has unified the UN in the laboratory and helps other laboratories identify new drugs and upgrade their quality standards. The UNODC has also

launched a UN Toolkit on Synthetic drugs. These measures have been helpful but insufficient. There needs to be immediate action to stop this widespread loss of life. There are various possible solutions that have been attempted to be implemented such as increased scanning and policing as well as rehabilitation solutions that attempt to cure the addiction.

Questions to Consider:

1. Are there less dangerous viable alternatives to fentanyl?
2. What are the possible repercussions of stopping these organized crime groups' drug trafficking?
3. How can the international community become involved and help?

Useful Links:

- <https://nida.nih.gov/publications/drugfacts/fentanyl>
- [www.hsgac.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/imo/media/doc/Fentanyl%20Synthetic%20Drugs%20Report%2063%20\(FINAL\)%20-%203.pdf](http://www.hsgac.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/imo/media/doc/Fentanyl%20Synthetic%20Drugs%20Report%2063%20(FINAL)%20-%203.pdf)
- www.fatf-gafi.org/content/dam/fatf-gafi/reports/Money-Laundering-Fentanyl-Synthetic-Opioids.pdf.coredownload.inline.pdf

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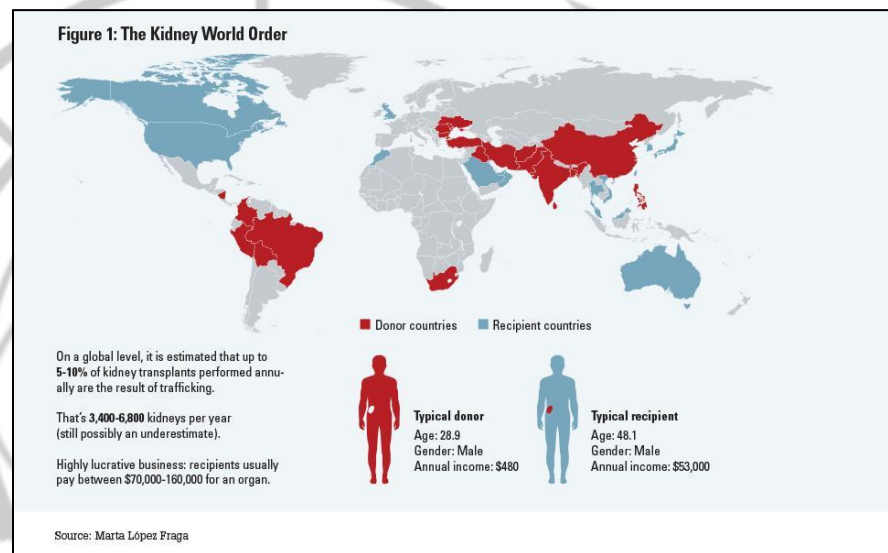
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Topic B: Combating Organ Trafficking From Underdeveloped Countries**Background:**

Organ trafficking is the illegal trade of humans for the removal of their organs. It is estimated that 10 percent of all organ transplants are done with trafficked organs and the profits are estimated to be between 870 million to 1.7 billion United States Dollars annually. This illegal trade stems from the fact that legal transplants cover only roughly 10 percent of patients on waiting lists worldwide. This extreme lack of organs creates a lucrative business that victimizes many people from underdeveloped countries. According to the ICAT, organ trafficking differs from regular human trafficking in that it requires a variety of different medical professionals to remove the organs. This is an ever-growing crisis that requires immediate action to remedy. Illegal organs most often come from developing countries, where the people's organs are forcibly taken. Organ transplantation is still quite a new medical development, the first kidney transplant was performed in 1954.

**Current Situation:**

Currently, illegal organ transplants are advertised online for comparatively lower prices than legal ones. Additionally, these organs come overwhelmingly from poor countries and unwilling victims. The average age for a kidney donor is about 30 years old. The average age for

a kidney recipient is nearly 50 years old. The biggest difference between the typical organ donor and recipient, however, is the average income. The donor has an average annual income of \$480 whereas the recipient has an average annual income of \$53000. This shows that the income disparity between the average donor and recipient is large, in part due to unwilling donors who come from very underprivileged situations. This high level of demand that fuels this illegal trade is the cause of this issue, therefore some countries are working on increasing donation levels. There are various factors causing this shortage in organs. Globally, life expectancy is increasing, meaning that more and more people will need an organ at some point in their lifetimes. Modern diseases such as obesity and high blood pressure are becoming more common and can often cause organs to need to be replaced.

Past UN Actions:

The UN has attempted to combat this issue through resolution 25/1 *Preventing and combating trafficking in human organs and trafficking in persons for the purpose of organ removal*. While this has been helpful and has done some help to reduce the impact of this issue, immediate action needs to be taken to remedy this issue. Some solutions have been implemented that include promoting organ donation, increasing synthetic organ production, producing genetically modified animal organs for transplant, and increasing enforcement and penalties against organ trafficking. There has been a strong push from the medical community for increased research into xenotransplantation, the transplant of animal organs into humans. Recently, the first successful xenotransplant of a pig heart into a human was performed, opening up this possibility. There has also been a push from the opposite end to create stronger enforcement mechanisms and policing against trafficking, with mixed results. Some governments have attempted to promote becoming an organ donor after death.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why does this disparity in the supply and demand of organs exist?
2. What are additional considerations in addressing this illegal organ trade?
3. How can the international community become involved and help?

Useful Links:

- [lop.parl.ca/sites/PublicWebsite/default/en_CA/ResearchPublications/202083E#:~:text="Trafficking%20in%20persons%20for%20the,vulnerability%2C%20or%20of%20the%20giving](https://lop.parl.ca/sites/PublicWebsite/default/en_CA/ResearchPublications/202083E#:~:text=)
- icat.un.org/sites/g/files/tmzbdl461/files/publications/icat_brief_tip_for_or_final.pdf
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