

Global & Regional

Opponents of the War on Drugs Are Not Satisfied With the UN's Plan to End It

Vice News (15/03)

Next month, the UN General Assembly Special Session on Drugs will endorse a resolution that many hoped would encourage countries to stop locking up and marginalizing drug users, and instead embrace harm reduction, alternatives to incarceration, and even decriminalization.

But, as the UN's Commission on Narcotics Drugs convened in Vienna on Monday for its annual meeting ahead of UNGASS, nearly 200 civil society groups and opponents of the drug war released a joint letter that said the planning for next month's event is "perilously close to representing a serious systemic failure of the UN system."

Led by China, Mekong nations take on Golden Triangle narco-empires

Reuters via Japan Times (16/03)

While attacks on Mekong shipping have tailed off, drug production and trafficking in the untamed region, known as the Golden Triangle, is booming — despite the presence of Chinese gunboats and units of Chinese armed police along the Mekong. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates that Southeast Asia's trade in heroin and methamphetamine was worth \$31 billion in 2013.

The UN's Drug Meeting in Vienna: Russian Trolling, Jackie Chan, and Lots of Propaganda

Vice News (17/03)

The countries with the world's deadliest drug laws have been on full display — literally — this week during the UN's annual narcotics meeting in Vienna. Several nations that routinely execute drug offenders have set up stalls in a large, circular hall that delegates convening for the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs must pass through in order to attend the proceedings.

The U.S. Wants To Adopt A More Humane Drug Policy. Just Be Careful What You Call It

Huffington Post Australia (18/03)

In recent years, Brownfield has been a proponent of drug policy reform, and just this week, he said that American officials were looking with other U.N. member states to "[find areas of pragmatic reform](#)" to drug policy. He has also called for "[flexible](#)" interpretations of the three-decades-old U.N. drug control treaties that critics say have restricted movement toward more progressive drug laws in the United States.

Brownfield's full statement, provided to HuffPost by Open Society Foundations, shows he actually didn't disparage harm reduction programs at all. Rather, he suggested that other people in the United States consider "harm reduction" to be a code for "legalization," and so he tries to avoid using the term and advocates replacing it with a new one.

Afghanistan

[What's really behind the 'failure' of the US 'war on drugs' in Afghanistan?](#)

Open Democracy (17/03)

Since 2001, the United States has [spent](#) over \$700 billion on the war in Afghanistan. In contrast, it has spent only [\\$7 billion](#) on counternarcotics operations there. What should we conclude from the fact that the 'drug war' in Afghanistan accounts for a mere 1% of total expenses? We should conclude that drugs are not a priority for US foreign policy, and never have been. The US government has no serious interest in tackling drug problems. In fact, if it did, its strategy would be the exact opposite of what it has been doing for several decades now.

Australia

[As Australian authorities prevent pill testing, the US is quietly telling festivalgoers all about their drugs](#)

News.com.au (19/03)

Dance Safe works with multiple festivals with their booths stocked with all manner of healthy aids — from condoms to water and lots of information on drugs. At a select few, they can also even test people's stash. At some festivals, they have also implemented an 'early warning' system to warn festivalgoers about potential dodgy drugs in circulation. Senior legal adviser at the Drug Policy Alliance, Daniel Abrahamson, said the debate on the best way to tackle drugs in the US had been raging for years. But in the last five years there has been a "sea change" in thinking on the issue.

China

[China Exclusive: Anti-narcotics police face greater risks as drug crimes climb](#)

Xinhua News (18/03)

The death of an armed police officer in southwest China's Yunnan province has triggered an outcry for harsher measures on drug-related crimes and better protection of officers. Rising drug-related cases, plus the use of guns, have posed grave challenges and danger to the narcotics force, officers told Xinhua. The job of a narcotics police officer is more risky than others, as the criminals resort to more violent measures when resisting arrest, they said.

India

[BSF-Rangers aiding drug trade: Captain Amarinder Singh](#)

NYOOOZ (19/03)

Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee (PPCC) president Captain Amarinder Singh reiterated his resolve to finish the drug problem at the earliest in Punjab. He also called for a national drug policy to have uniform laws across the country. He alleged that cross-border smuggling was not possible without connivance of BSF and Pakistan Rangers. As against Rahul Gandhi's claims of 70% drug addiction among youths of Punjab, Amarinder said 75% youths of the state were in the grip of narcotics.

Indonesia

[National Narcotics Agency Ready for Drug Testing on High-Level Officials](#)

Global Indonesian Voices (16/03)

Following last Sunday's (13/3) arrest of a South Sumatra district head, the National Narcotics Agency (BNN) on Tuesday (15/3) called for urine drug tests on all regional administrators to ensure that they are drug-free.

[Indonesia to keep death penalty as punishment for drug crimes](#)

South China Morning Post (19/03)

Foreign minister defends capital punishment as "part of Indonesian law" and at the same time, says the country is trying to promote its less conservative and more tolerant brand of Islam around the world.

[Drug convicts may be executed this year](#)

Jakarta Post (19/03)

A top government official has signaled that the country might start executing no more than 10 Indonesian drug convicts on death row this year although human rights campaigners' opposition to capital punishment remains. More than 162 death-row inmates are currently awaiting their fate, 73 of whom have been convicted of murder and 89 of drug trafficking.

[Indonesia Heightens Zero-Tolerance Stance on Drugs](#)

Antara News (20/03)

Indonesia has declared a zero-tolerance stance on drugs, particularly drug traffickers and syndicates, Indonesian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Vienna Rachmat Budiman has said. The ambassador made the statement while speaking at the 59th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) held in Vienna, Austria, recently.

Myanmar

[Myanmar lurches toward narcotics crisis](#)

Nikkei Asian Review (18/03)

Anthony Davis claims that 17 years after the country's former military rulers promised a drug-free nation through intensive crop eradication, Myanmar is heading toward a possible drugs crisis. High demand and a rising wave of cheap and addictive methamphetamine-based tablets, once destined for The Mekong River sub region, are now being increasingly consumed in Myanamese cities. Davis claims that the country is under resourced to meet the challenge, and the newly formed government too unstable.

[Pat Ja San: a controversial mission](#)

Myanmar Times (21/03)

A group of sickle-wielding vigilantes made its way through Myanmar's northern Kachin State in January and February, clearing poppy fields nearly ready to be harvested in a quest to end production of the illicit drug. The mission turned farmers whose livelihoods were being cut down into angry and, at times, armed adversaries.

New Zealand

[Massive loophole in New Zealand's cannabis laws](#)

Scoop (14/03)

Travelers can now bring medical cannabis into New Zealand, thanks to a massive loophole in the Misuse of Drugs Act 1975.

Pakistan

[ANF intelligence wing expanded](#)

Pakistan Today (13/03)

Pakistan's Anti Narcotics agency has increased efforts inside the capital to locate drug smugglers and peddlers, including increased intelligence gathering and the establishment of canine units. The ANF insists the crackdown on drugs does not disproportionately fund law enforcement efforts, pointing to the launch of an Awareness and Prevention Programmes aimed at students, including outreach through radio, television and print media.

[7 million are addicted to drugs in Pakistan](#)

Pakistan Today (17/03)

In a seminar at Karachi University, Social Welfare Secretary Sharique Ahmed claimed that 45% of drugs are trafficked from Afghanistan, and there are seven million addicts living in Pakistan. He claimed that substances like tea; cigarettes, coffee, pan and Gutika behave as a gateway to hard drugs, saying that higher awareness among youth was key to fighting the "drug menace".

Singapore

[Uncompromising stance has kept Singapore safe from drugs: MHA](#)

Straits Times (15/03)

The uncompromising stance against drugs is the reason why Singapore has stayed relatively drug-free, with arrested drug abusers comprising less than 0.1 per cent of the population. Senior Minister of State for Home Affairs Desmond Lee said this on Monday (March 14) at a meeting of international delegates, at the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) in Vienna, Austria.

[Singapore will not support calls for drug legalisation: Desmond Lee](#)

Channel News Asia (16/03)

The Senior Minister of State for Home Affairs says cannabis should remain an illicit drug and Singapore will not follow other countries in allowing medical and recreational use of the drug.

[This is how Singapore teaches children to stay away from drugs](#)

Open Democracy (18/03)

The city-state has been distributing morbid anti-drug propaganda in its schools. So we asked an expert what Singapore's harsh anti-drug policies actually achieve in reality.

Thailand

[Thailand's quiet man](#)

Bangkok Post (19/03)

Justice Minister Paiboon is unassuming, but he makes a lot of waves. On the illicit drug suppression front, Gen Paiboon has stressed the need to target the movement of precursor substances from countries that produce them. He has set his sights on making the Safe Mekong Coordination Centre instrumental in suppressing precursor chemicals as the drug-fighting body enters its third phase of operations this year.

When he attended the 59th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) in Vienna recently, Gen Paiboon did not hesitate to plead with the global forum to pay attention to the manufacturers of precursor manufacturers of precursor chemicals.

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