

Global & Regional

[Impasse or turning point for the 'war on drugs'? UNGASS 2016, explained](#)

Open Democracy (16/05)

The official consensus from the United Nations summit last month was 'business as usual' for the global drug control regime. But there's cause for optimism for the future. Here are three predictions.

[Much of World Suffers Not From Abuse of Painkillers, but Absence of Them](#)

New York Times (17/05)

Many ill people with a legitimate need for drugs like oxycodone and other narcotics known as opioid analgesics cannot get them and are suffering and dying in pain, according to health officials, doctors and patients' rights advocates.

[Making a fundamental shift in drug policy and harm reduction](#)

Devex (17/05)

According to a recent report by U.K.-based NGO Harm Reduction International, "The Case for a Harm Reduction Decade: Progress, Potential and Paradigm Shifts," new HIV infections among people who inject drugs could be virtually eliminated by 2030 if a small percentage of global drug control spending is redirected toward harm reduction programs. Maria Phelan, deputy director of HRI, told Devex there were two major barriers to the scaling up of harm reduction programs: political will and funding.

[Donald Trump, Russian Thugs and Philippine Death Squads: How Anti-Drug Laws Empower the Strongman](#)

The Influence (18/05)

Russia's Mayor of Yektarinburg, Yevgeny Roizman, a tough guy who's served time for robbery, extortion and weapons offenses, is the leader of City Without Drugs. Back in the Philippines, President-elect Duterte shares Roizman's disdain for people who use drugs, but takes an even harder line: "To all the bleeding hearts of US-based crime watch," he once said, "you want a taste of my justice? Come to Davao City, Philippines, and do drugs in my city. I will execute you in public."

[Across Asia, we need to give the women incarcerated by the 'war on drugs' a voice](#)

Open Democracy (19/05)

Only then will the public begin to see the human face of repressive policies and the lives destroyed in the pursuit of an impossible 'drug-free world'.

Australia

[For Australians accused of drug trafficking in China, Hong Kong can make a world of difference](#)

Sydney Morning Herald (17/05)

In a landmark Hong Kong court ruling in September, six westerners – including two Australians – were set free despite having been caught with commercial quantities of crystal methamphetamine while attempting to board flights to Australia. Back in Guangzhou, however, as many as a dozen Australians remain stranded on charges which could attract the death penalty.

[Mexican drug cartels a new danger to Australia](#)

The Age (22/05)

In the wake of the dismantling of Colombian drug runners in the late 1990s and early 2000s – Mexican drug cartels have grown in power, beginning worldwide wholesale distribution of drugs with an emphasis on cocaine and methamphetamines. Recently Australia and the Asia Pacific have emerged as prime new targets.

[Green hopes as Australia legalises medical cannabis](#)

Free Malaysia Today (22/05)

While recreational use remains illegal, laws were passed in February permitting it for medical purposes, in a move Health Minister Sussan Ley said meant “genuine patients are no longer treated as criminals”.

China

[How secretive Chinese drugs labs outrun laws on synthetic highs](#)

Market Watch (16/05)

A new breed of Chinese chemist bent on beating the legal system is helping satisfy global demand for synthetic recreational drugs.

Indonesia

[New hope emerges for Indonesia death row inmates](#)

Herald Malaysia (19/05)

The death penalty in Indonesia will not be abolished but condemned inmates could avoid the firing squad if they show enough remorse for their crimes while awaiting execution, a government official said May 18.

[Executions in Indonesia may be delayed until after Ramadan](#)

Sydney Morning Herald (19/05)

Indonesian Attorney-General Muhammad Prasetyo has flagged the latest round of executions in the country may be delayed until after the Islamic fasting month of Ramadan.

[Indonesia considers sending drug convicts to remote islands](#)

Global Herald (21/05)

Indonesia’s anti-drugs agency has proposed sending drug convicts to remote islands to fend for themselves, to help reduce pressure on the overcrowded prison system.

In Jakarta’s main prison for drug offenders, more than 3,200 prisoners are locked up in a space meant for just 1000, with many serving time for possession of small quantities of marijuana.

[‘No more money for our needles’](#)

Inside Indonesia (23/05)

Indonesia’s current drug policy still puts many users through the criminal justice system, with harm reduction based in a total abstinence paradigm implemented by poorly-resourced rehabilitation centres.

Malaysia

[IGP shoots down MP’s idea to kill drug dealers and addicts](#)

The Star (18/05)

Kinabatangan MP Datuk Bung Mokhtar Radin’s suggestion that police should gun down drug dealers and addicts instead of hauling them to court is not suitable to be implemented in Malaysia, said Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar, the Inspector-General of Police.

[Zahid: Anti-drug NGOs need to put aside differences](#)

Free Malaysia Today (22/05)

All Malaysians are assets to the country, but if they choose to take drugs, they become a liability to the country, the society and their families, said Home Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi. Zahid, who is

also deputy prime minister, said all anti-drugs non-governmental organisations (NGOs) must put aside their differences in finding a solution to curb the misuse of drugs in the country.

[Children on drugs left behind by 'high' parents](#)

Malay Mail (23/05)

Children as young as seven are getting caught up in the web of addiction because of their drug-using parents. They are taking drugs left lying around by their parents who are "high", National Anti-Drug Agency deputy director-general Azizan Ariffin said.

Myanmar

[Solving Myanmar's drug trade means involving militias in the peace process](#)

Myanmar Times (18/05)

To unravel Myanmar's drug trade and end the decades-long civil war, Tatmadaw-backed militias will need to be involved in the dialogue, experts say.

[CSOs tackle India-Myanmar narcotics trade](#)

Myanmar Times (18/05)

Civil society activists in northwest Myanmar are reaching out to their Indian counterparts in a bid to tackle the narcotics crisis along the border.

New Zealand

[Fears Bill could leave addicts languishing in cells](#)

Radio New Zealand (19/05)

A court judge who presides over one of the country's busiest courts has slammed a proposed bill which he says could see drug and alcohol addicts forced to languish in a police cell before being admitted to secure treatment centres.

Pakistan

[Saudi executes Pakistani drug smuggler](#)

Daily Mail (17/05)

Saudi Arabia on Tuesday put to death a Pakistani man convicted of drug smuggling, bringing to 93 the number of executions in the kingdom this year.

Philippines

[Save Mary Jane, Duterte urged](#)

Journal (16/05)

The family of detained Mary Jane Veloso and Migrant International are appealing to President-elect Rodrigo Duterte to ask for clemency for the condemned Filipina facing execution for carrying drugs in Indonesia.

['The drugs have lessened': meet the Davao residents who insist Rodrigo Duterte is the right man to lead Philippines](#)

South China Morning Post (19/05)

Life in the slums of Davao became much easier after a fearsome drugs crackdown enforced by mayor-turned president Rodrigo Duterte, awed residents say, offering an insight into what the Philippines can expect under its new leader.

[WATCH | Duterte on drug mules on death row abroad: 'Wala akong magawa. Sorry'](#)

Interaksyon (20/05)

Incoming president Rodrigo Duterte has built his campaign around a promise to combat drugs, which is why he is not too keen on helping Filipinos who are on death row abroad for carrying drugs.

Articles missed out from last week's news digest:

[Mafen madness: Busted for cannabis in China](#)

Freedom Leaf (15/05)

While ethnic minority groups like the Uyghurs and Hui (another Muslim population in Xinjiang) have long traditions of using psychoactive cannabis, the Han (China's majority ethnic group) have historically turned to opium as their drug of choice. Many blame Great Britain for introducing opium to China, but it actually appeared in the early 18th century, well over 100 years before the Opium Wars.

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