Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific

Transnational organized crime in Southeast Asia and its Evolution: Growth and Impact
Jakarta, 13 August 2019
The TOCTA concept

- UNODC has been mandated by Member States to conduct threat and risk analysis on emerging trends in drug and crime issues (E/CN.7/2007/14).

- Tasked to provide “support for the development and implementation of regional programmes” through its field office network (E/RES/2009/23).

- TOCTAs look at illegal flows affecting a region primarily using a mix of official data and intelligence.

- Provide an understanding of the mechanics of illicit flows, their size, and the implications of this information for law enforcement and development policy.
Illicit drugs: heroin and methamphetamine

Displacement of organized crime has led to a massive expansion of methamphetamine production and trafficking

Heroin: US$ 8.7 - 10.3 billion
Methamphetamine: US$ 30.3 – 61.4 billion
Heroin

Decreases in heroin demand

Expert perception indices* of heroin and methamphetamine use in East and Southeast Asia, 2007–2017

Note: *Based on information from 16 countries and territories reporting on trends in East and South-East Asia over the 2007-2017 period; 2007 was used a base line (=100); Source: UNODC, responses to the annual report questionnaire (ARQ).

Opium poppy cultivation in Lao PDR and Myanmar, 2013-2018

Note: *Data for 2016 are not available for Lao PDR and Myanmar, and 2017 and 2018 are not available for Lao PDR.
Heroin

Retail heroin market estimate (high-end)

Note: * China includes Hong Kong, China, Macau, China and Taiwan Province of China.
Source: UNODC elaboration based on government data.
Methamphetamine

Profound change undergoing in the regional illicit drug market

Seizures of all forms of meth in East and Southeast Asia, 2013-2018*

Note: *Data for 2018 are preliminary.
Source: UNODC
Methamphetamine

Primary driving factor for the meth market expansion in SEA

- Displacement of organized crime groups to northern and eastern Myanmar, known as the Golden Triangle since 2015

- Uninterrupted flows of meth from Myanmar

- Thailand alone seized more than 50% of the total confirmed seizures of meth in ESEA in 2018

Trends in the number of clandestine meth laboratories dismantled in China and seizures of meth in Myanmar and Thailand, 2014-2018*

Note: *2018 data for China cover the first nine months of the year.
Methamphetamine trafficking flows

- Key route: Myanmar – Thailand – Malaysia – other destinations, including Indonesia, Australia, Japan, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea

- Increasing flows of meth to Laos, Cambodia and Viet Nam to evade law enforcement detection in Thailand, starting from 2019
Thailand-Malaysia border

Malaysia, a key embarkation point for crystal meth seized in neighbouring countries, including New Zealand

- Price for 2018 the lowest on record
- A number of significant seizures meth trafficked through the Andaman Sea

Changes in the wholesale price of crystal meth in Malaysia, 2013-2018

Source: DAINAP
Indonesia meth seizures

Significantly increased meth flows

- Major destination and transit points for meth trafficked from Myanmar via Malaysia
- Seizures of meth in 2018 15 times larger than 2013

Source: BNN, Indonesia
Selected crystal meth maritime and seaport trafficking cases in and through the Andaman Sea, 2018-2019
Presence of a large-scale drug trafficking groups

Cambodia / Lao PDR

Thailand

Viet Nam

Indonesia

Malaysia

Australia
Methamphetamine

Retail methamphetamine market estimate (high-end)

- Indonesia accounts for nearly one-third of the total illicit revenues made in Southeast Asia

Note: * China includes Hong Kong, China, Macau, China and Taiwan Province of China.
Source: UNODC elaboration based on government data.
Casinos and money laundering
Special focus needed

- 230 licensed casinos in SEA as of Jan 2019
- Many emerged after a crackdown on money laundering activities in Macau, China
Responding (overall)

- Asia-Pacific leadership dialogue is crucial

- Development of a comprehensive and functional strategy to address transnational crime
  - From the recognition of the problem to build strategies through existing cooperation mechanism
  - Incorporating measures to address ‘demand’ for illicit commodities and services

- Strengthening national and regional data collection capacity and reporting

- Minimise disparities in capacity gaps and improve cross-border cooperation (intelligence sharing, law enforcement operations, and criminal justice cooperation)

- Specific recommendations made for each transnational crime (i.e. precursors)
Thank you

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