

# Study Guide

## United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

### Introduction to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Established in 1997 through a merger between the United Nations Drug Control Programme and the Centre for International Crime Prevention, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is mandated to assist member-states of the United Nations in their struggle against illicit drugs, crime, and terrorism. It operates in all regions of the world through an extensive network of field offices; it has, over the decade following its inauguration, emerged as a global leader in the fight against illicit drugs and international crime. It relies on voluntary contributions, mainly from governments, which make up 90% of its budget. In the Millennium Declaration, member-states also resolved to intensify efforts to fight transnational crime in all its dimensions, to redouble the efforts to implement the commitment to counter the world drug problem, and to take concerted action against international terrorism.

### The UNODC at LGSMUN IX

At LGSMUN IX, we expect an extremely high level of debate over the four days of this conference; the gravity of the topic at hand requires such. Transnational organized crime and drug trafficking is of growing concern in today's world, and few countries are exempt to the often broad impact that illicit trade has on development; it is testimony to the scale of the issue that the illicit drug trafficking industry's vast illegal profits amount to an estimated 322 billion dollars a year. This activity translates into the undermining of state authority and the rule of law by the criminal groups involved in drug production and transit, through the fueling of corruption, the compromise of the electoral process, and among other things, the general spread of anarchy. At LGSMUN IX, we look forward to a debate that acknowledges and contemplates all of these issues, and that which moves toward solutions such that, in all cases, the impact of criminal influence and money on the peace and economy of West Africa may be minimized.

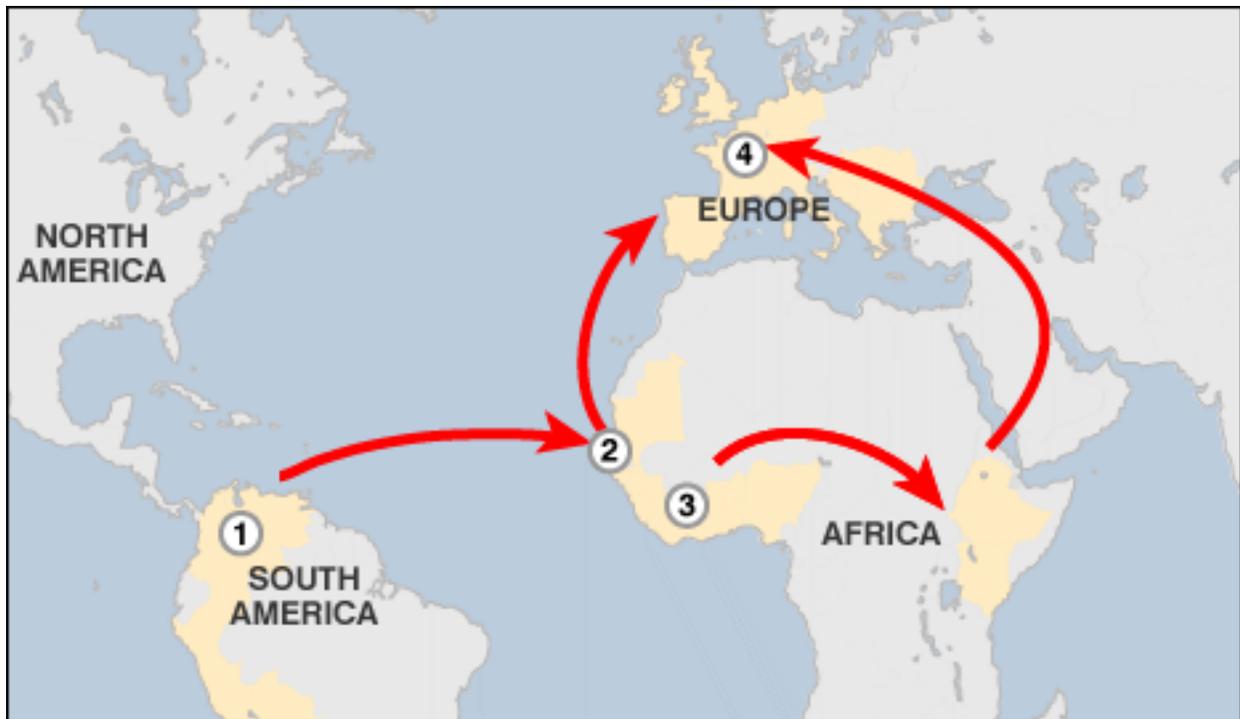
## **Topic Area: The Illicit Drug Trade in Western Africa**

Home to over 325 million people, the region of West Africa has long been a hub for organized crime and illegal economies to the point where said activity has integrated itself within the political machinery and dictates the dynamics between the many factions engrossed in a constant battle for control in the region. From a historical point of view, Western Africa has remained in the peripheral shadow of states such as Columbia whose drug empires have stood unrivalled in all the world, despite the fact that it has been used for key strategic maneuvering and the transportation of narcotics coming in from South America and bound for the European market; therein lies the cause for the recent proliferation of drug trafficking in the region.

International drug networks have long relied on distribution centers in Latin America to smuggle cocaine out to the rest of the world. But a less publicized, highly lucrative cocaine trade has been quietly making its way to West Africa, turning the region into a key transit hub for drug shipments en route to Europe. Operating

largely with impunity, this booming cocaine trade is breeding corruption and threatening security across the region.

We increasingly look at what is happening in West Africa and its constituent countries with alarm. These countries are neither large producers of drugs nor markets for them, but are mainly transit points. But that has not prevented the illegal trade invading and corroding many aspects of their societies. West Africa has also become a major transit point on drug routes from South America to Europe and beyond. While it has so far escaped the bloody violence that scars Central America on a daily basis, the region is experiencing increased criminality, corruption and drugs use. Urgent action from the countries of West Africa and the wider international community is needed if we are not to become another battlefield in the failed "war on drugs". As economic development is threatened by transnational organized crime and illicit drugs, countering crime must form part of the development agenda, and social and economic development approaches need to form part of our response to organized crime. If we are to ensure that the Millennium Development



Goals are achieved, we must strengthen strategies to deliver these goals, including stepping up efforts to address issues such as money laundering, corruption and trafficking in wildlife, people and arms, and drugs. Organized crime and drugs impact every economy, in every country, but they are particularly devastating in weak and vulnerable countries. Weak and fragile countries are particularly vulnerable to the effects of transnational organized crime. These countries, some devastated by war, others making the complex journey towards democracy, are preyed upon by crime. As a result, organized crime flourishes, successes in development are reversed, and

opportunities for social and economic advancement are lost. Corruption, a facilitator of organized crime and drug trafficking, is a serious impediment to the rule of law and sustainable development. It can be a dominant factor driving fragile countries towards failure. It is estimated that up to US\$40 billion annually is lost through corruption in developing countries. Drugs and crime undermine development by eroding social and human capital. This degrades quality of life and can force skilled workers to leave, while the direct impacts of victimization, as well as fear of crime, may impede the development of those that remain. By limiting movement, crime

impedes access to possible employment and educational opportunities, and it discourages the accumulation of assets. Crime is also more “expensive” for poor people in poor countries and disadvantaged households may struggle to cope with the shock of victimization. Drugs and crime also undermine development by driving away business. Both foreign and domestic investors see crime as a sign of social instability, and crime drives up the cost of doing business. Tourism is a sector especially sensitive to crime issues. Drugs and crime, moreover, undermine the ability of the state to promote development by destroying the trust relationship between the people and the state, and undermining democracy and confidence in the criminal justice system. When people lose confidence in the criminal justice system, they may engage in vigilantism, which further undermines the state.

## **Historical Background**

### **Overview**

Drug trafficking is certainly not new to this region. As early as the 1970s, Nigerian criminal organizations played a major role in supplying ‘mules’, or human traffickers,

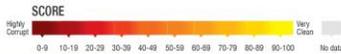
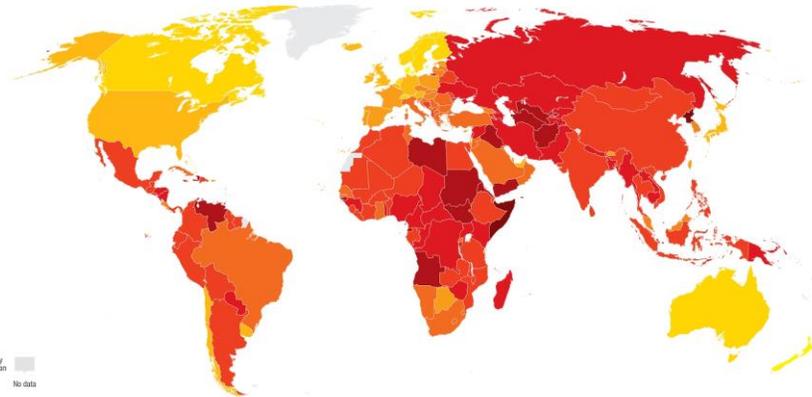
to fuel the illicit flow of drugs from the South Asian region to the United States by infiltrating diasporas (such as in Karachi, Bangkok or Sao Paulo), and using them to shuttle heroin to consumer markets. These self-same Nigerian smugglers are credited to have brought new and innovative methods of trafficking, such as the swallow method wherein couriers would ingest the pellets or packets containing dangerous narcotics and carry them across border checkpoints. All things considered, the West African region has traditionally played a role not exceeding that of a mere stopover point or a place to launder profits; it certainly wasn’t investing in mass production of narcotics as late as the early 2000s.

However, keeping in view of the current gravity of the illegal narcotics trading industry expanding within Western Africa, delegates would do well to remain well-aware of the region’s history of entertaining extremely frail political infrastructure. Organized crime’s chokehold over the Western African region, particularly in countries such as Guinea-Bissau (which is now an epicenter for drug manufacture and proliferation), precedes any semblance of illicit narcotics distribution. As Francisco

TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL  
the global coalition against corruption

# CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX 2014

The perceived levels of public sector corruption in 175 countries/territories around the world.



RANK	COUNTRY/TERRITORY	SCORE	RANK	COUNTRY/TERRITORY	SCORE	RANK	COUNTRY/TERRITORY	SCORE	RANK	COUNTRY/TERRITORY	SCORE	RANK	COUNTRY/TERRITORY	SCORE
1	Denmark	92	31	Chile	73	81	Croatia	48	139	Algeria	36	138	Nigeria	27
2	New Zealand	91	32	Uruguay	73	82	Slovenia	58	140	China	38	139	Russia	27
3	Finland	89	33	Austria	72	83	Ghana	48	141	Mozambique	31	140	Zimbabwe	21
4	Sweden	87	34	Bahamas	71	84	Cape Verde	57	142	Sierra Leone	31	141	Burundi	20
5	Norway	86	35	Korea (South)	65	85	Cuba	46	143	Bolivia	35	142	Uganda	26
6	Switzerland	86	36	United Arab Emirates	70	86	Oman	45	144	Mexico	35	143	Tanzania	26
7	Singapore	84	37	Malta	65	87	The FYR of Macedonia	45	145	Vietnam	31	144	Ukraine	26
8	Netherlands	83	38	Seychelles	64	88	Turkey	45	146	Moldova	35	145	Bangladesh	25
9	Luxembourg	82	39	France	69	89	Kuwait	44	147	Niger	35	146	Guinea	25
10	Canada	81	40	Qatar	69	90	South Africa	44	148	Argentina	34	147	Haiti	19
11	Australia	80	41	Saudi Arabia and the Emirates	67	91	Brazil	43	149	Djibouti	34	148	Kenya	25
12	Germany	79	42	Georgia	65	92	Bulgaria	43	150	Leos	29	149	Yemen	19
13	Iceland	79	43	Malaysia	62	93	Greece	43	151	Indonesia	34	150	Eritrea	18
14	United Kingdom	78	44	Cyprus	63	94	Italy	43	152	Albania	33	151	Libya	18
15	Belgium	76	45	Portugal	63	95	Romania	43	153	Ecuador	33	152	Uzbekistan	18
16	Japan	76	46	Puerto Rico	63	96	Trinidad and Tobago	42	154	Ethiopia	33	153	Turkmenistan	17
17	Barbados	74	47	Slovakia	60	97	Malawi	33	155	Kosovo	33	154	Congo Republic	23
18	Hong Kong	74	48	Bahrain	49	98	Cote d'Ivoire	32	156	Maldives	33	155	Iran	27
19	Ireland	74	49	Taiwan	61	99	Colombia	37	157	Nicaragua	28	156	South Sudan	15
20	United States	74	50	Israel	60	100	Trinidad and Tobago	42	158	Timor-Leste	28	157	Algeria	12
				Lesotho	49	101	Switzerland	43	159	Dominican Republic	32	158	Sudan	11
				Spain	60	102	Montenegro	42	160	Guatemala	32	159	Korea (North)	8
				India	55	103	Sao Tome and Principe	42	161	Cameroon	27	160	Somalia	8
				Rwanda	49	104	Egypt	37	162	Iran	27	161		
				Saudi Arabia	49	105	Gabon	37	163	Kyrgyzstan	27	162		
							Berlin	39	164	Lebanon	27	163		

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Thoumi, a Colombian economist stated, “Profitable illegal economic activity requires not only profitability, but also weak social and state controls on individual behavior... a society where government laws are easily evaded and social norms tolerate such evasion.” West Africa’s high level of corruption makes effective law-enforcement difficult to implement, since the continent suffers from hunger and unemployment. It is reported that drug traffickers are able to pay for their safety by recruiting policemen, army officers, and cabinet ministers to cooperate in the business.

It is noteworthy, however, that Western Africa had long ago been ahead of its time when it came to both drug production and trafficking. Mind-altering substances, such as kola, a light stimulant, was traded extensively within the sub-region and across the Sahara from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards; whilst rum, brandy and gin were key commodities consumed and traded along Atlantic routes since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The tale grows more worrying as these commodities were not only legal at the time but are also not considered as the most dangerous narcotics even today. Substances such as cannabis, heroin and cocaine have

existed in the region for well over 100 years. The late 19<sup>th</sup> century saw experimentation lead to the production and trade of opium across the Zambezi River. In the late 1970s heroin and cocaine re-appeared as significant smuggled commodities, commonly imported from major producing countries in Latin America and Asia and repacked in trading hubs such as Lagos. They were then transported in smaller quantities to major centers of demand in Europe and the US.

### The History of Cannabis in West Africa

Cannabis has had a slightly different history, as it was traded along the West African coast since the 1930s. Sierra Leoneans began to explore a free market of Cannabis at this time and were encouraged to do this as a result of Freetown's importance as port, the existence of diaspora communities who were mainly employed as stevedores and the presence of Sierra Leonean sailors on steamships. As was the case in the boom that was to come in 1970s as well as the inflation of drug trafficking in the status quo, the marriage between diaspora communities and travel was facilitated by a time of severe economic depression. The

trade in this substance steadily increased after the Second World War and became the focus of one of the first drug debates and policies in independent Nigeria.

General economic decline and with demand for conventional African crops declining in the world market reinforced the West African reliance on cannabis as a cash crop. Diversification was of key importance for farmers in the colonial and independent periods. Distillation of locally produced gin or *akpeteshie*, which held several similarities with cannabis, not only helped justify what were essentially criminal activities to the general public, but was obscured under the cover of cocoa production which was usually done deep in the forests. This same model was carried forth into the independent era following the Second World War, as cocoa farmers depended on high quality (high THC level) cannabis as a reliable source of income between cocoa harvests and the dependency only grew as the demand for cocoa began to fall in 1958.

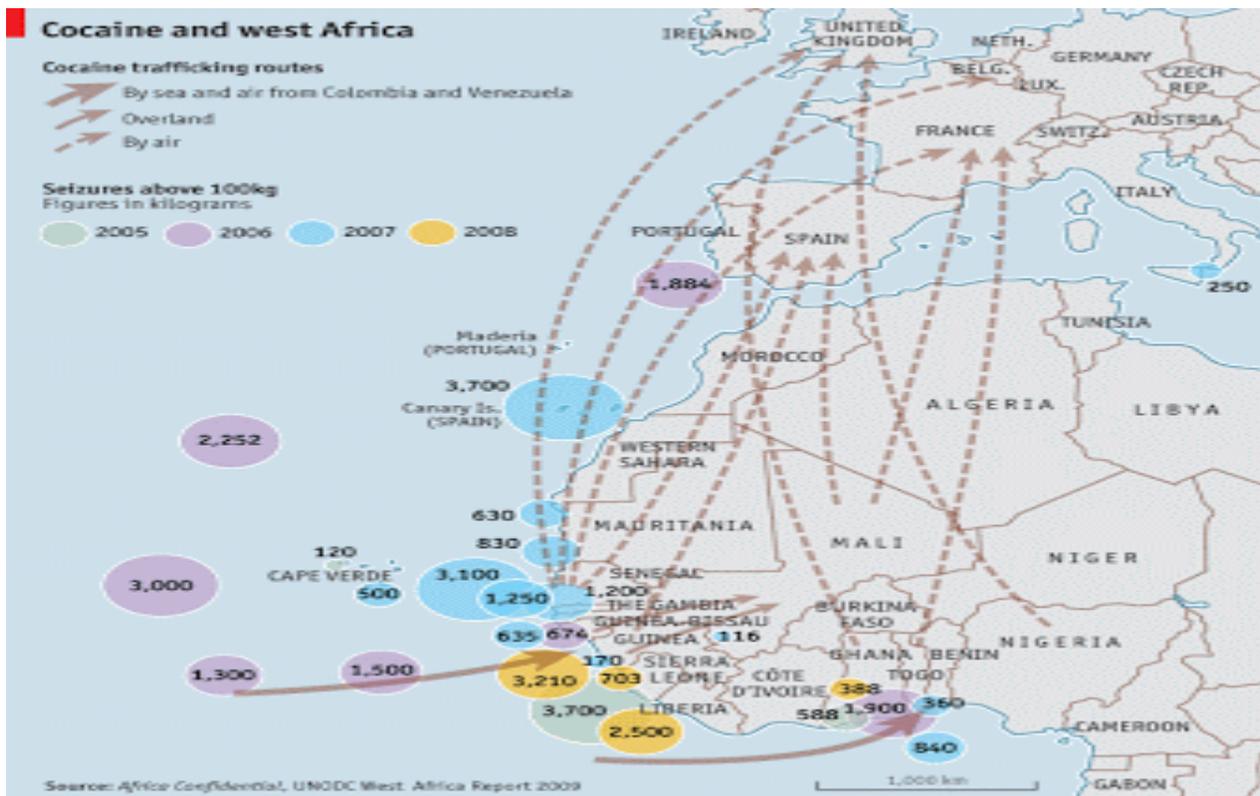
By the 1990s, a cannabis producer was rated to earn 300 times what a producer of the most premium cocoa was. It was during this time that West African production of

herbal cannabis accounted for a quarter of the total global production with states such as Ghana and Mozambique being the most prominent. The Narcotics Control Board stated that more than 50% of the cannabis produced in the 1980s only in Ghana was bound for export. Cannabis production soon allowed a pathway for the proliferation of cocaine and heroin at the same time when said drugs were dominating the international drug market. It was here that Nigerian criminal organizations were established who became notorious globally and expanded

their operations to Ghana. Their role in transporting drugs to consumer markets across Latin America and Europe came as result of their close association and business ventures with the Columbian cartels. However, the Nigerians were not hierarchal and thus didn't deal with the cartels directly.

### Nigeria in the Last 30 Years

In March 1998, the US government labeled Nigeria as 'the hub of African narcotics trafficking', keeping in mind traffickers' investment in bulk shipment of narcotics to



Nigeria's neighbors. After Nigeria had dispatched a peacekeeping force to Liberia in 1990, under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), some members of the Nigerian expeditionary force developed interests in the narcotics trade, further exemplifying the establishment's weak hold on the political machinery. Their control of Liberia's seaports and of its international airport provided ideal transport facilities. A further attraction was Liberia's use of the US dollar as an official currency. By the mid-1990s, thus, some Nigerian drug traffickers in particular had not only developed the means to invest in bulk shipments of narcotics, but had also become fully global, having business associates in both producing and consuming countries as well as other facilities in countries outside Nigeria.

The Nigerian penchant for organized crime undoubtedly allowed it to become the first West African state to arise as a major player in the global illicit drug market yet economic dilapidation remains the root of the issue. The 1980s were years of rapid economic decline in West Africa, including in Nigeria, the region's only major oil

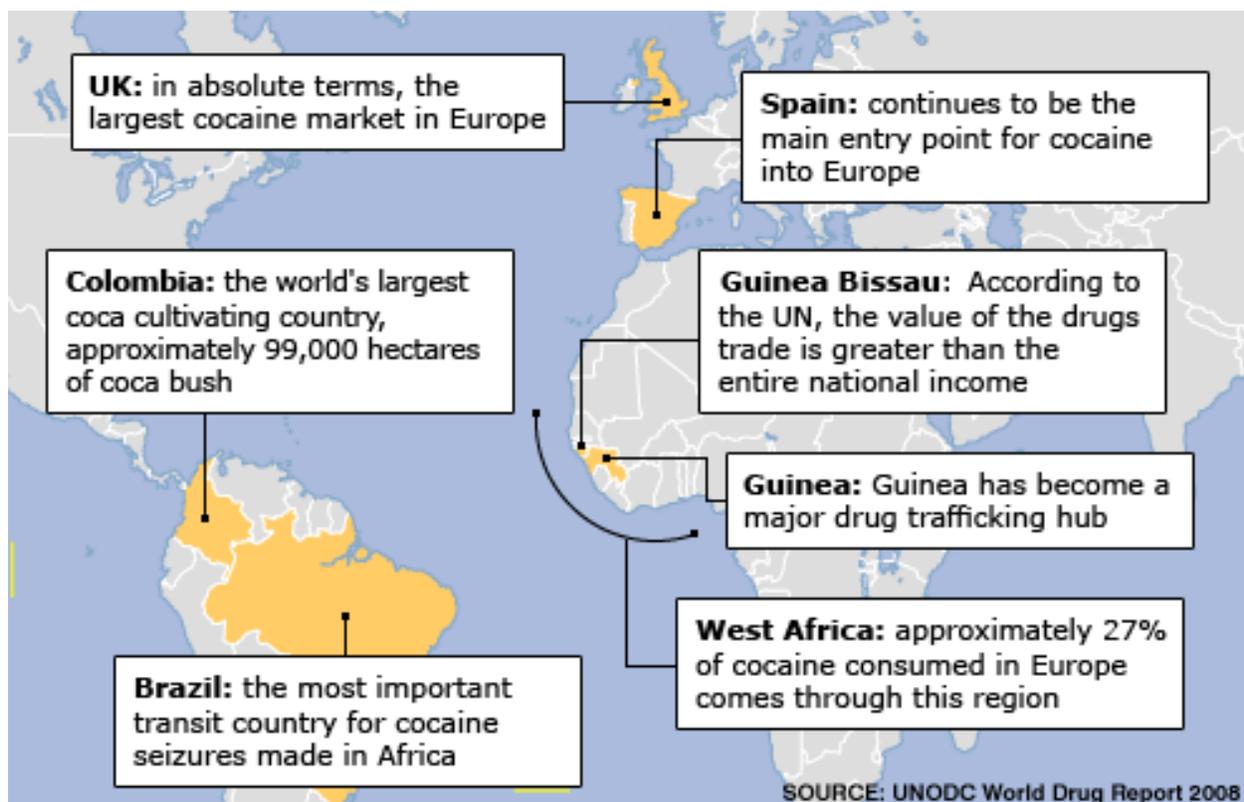
producer at that time and corruption within the establishment only helped compound the issue. Most West African countries, in financial difficulties as a result of the global convulsions of the period and their own profligacy in earlier, more favorable times, were obliged to borrow money from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank and to undergo the process of economic liberalization known as structural adjustment. This required deep cuts in public expenditure and the sacking of public employees. Whether imposed by the international financial institutions or from domestic necessity, drastic reductions in public budgets plunged many people into acute financial difficulty, and this was undoubtedly an incentive to some to make money by any means possible. Here began the trend of economic pressures shaping the executive structure of the country.

When General Buhari made drug trafficking punishable by death, the emphatic opposition to the severity of that action has been regarded by many as evidence of the majority of the populace propagating the narco-culture that was gripping consumer markets across the world. The opposition was one of the main contributing factors to

the coup in 1985 which established General Ibrahim Babangida who enforced a much less stringent policy. When the head of the Ghanaian drug police visited Bangkok in 1986, he found 'a lot of Ghanaians and Nigerians' in prison for drug offence. By 1988, some 2,000 Nigerians were reported to be serving sentences for drug offence abroad. United States authorities reportedly arrested 851 Nigerians for drug offence between 1984 and 1989, and reckoned that 55 percent of the heroin arriving at New York's John F. Kennedy airport was being carried by Nigerians. In 1991, Nigeria's own Ministry of Justice

reported that 15,433 Nigerians had been arrested worldwide for drug offences since 1984. Of these, 4,802 had been convicted. According to a statement attributed to the deputy director-general of the Ministry of External Affairs, Nigerians were the leading nationality arrested for drug offences in India, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Thailand.

Nigeria has thus played perhaps the most influential role in the emergence of Western Africa as a major player in the global narco culture especially as aforementioned criminal organizations began expanding their operations to neighboring nations.



## Guinea Bissau

Guinea Bissau perhaps best exemplifies the role of economic downturn in accelerating drug trade. Indeed, the world's 5<sup>th</sup> poorest nation has been deemed by the UN as the first example of a narco state in the entire continent's history. Guinea Bissau, with a population of 1.5 million, is ranked fifth from the bottom in the United Nations world development index. Even its recent history is one of torment: after 13 years of bloody guerrilla-warfare based conflict, it won independence from Portugal, spent its first few years under a Marxist Leninist dictatorship, João Bernardo Vieira, until he was ousted by a military rebellion. Successive crises, two wars and economic collapse brought Vieira back in 2005, with a purge of the army and deceptive stability. Nigerian drug gangs have always been an energetic presence on the global trafficking scene, but the target of the South American traffickers have been the 'failed states' along the Gold Coast, where poverty is extreme, where society has been ravaged by war and the institutions of state can be easily bought off - so that instead of

enforcement, there is collusion. And no more so than Guinea-Bissau, whose weakness makes it a trafficker's dream. The US Drug Enforcement Agency analyzed how cartels reach Western Africa by the shortest crossing over the ocean and when in the region, can use any one of the many airstrips left behind after the ravages of war. On the basis of this claim, Guinea Bissau's stratospheric rise in popularity as a cocaine trafficking hub for Columbian cartels is no shock. A failed nation state, it has no mechanism to monitor its border with neither the sea nor its airspace and thus when increased policing on the traditional trafficking routes applied pressure on the South American traffickers, they turned to Guinea Bissau. The geography of Guinea-Bissau, with its myriad of coastal islands, makes it the perfect destination for unloading drugs that have been transported by sea, often from Brazil or Venezuela. The virtual collapse of the country's administration, the inadequacies of the police and justice sector, impunity, endemic corruption and widespread poverty create fertile conditions for the flourishing of the cocaine trade which, in

turn, has further adverse consequences at the social, economic and governance levels.

Despite being well aware of West Africa's history of drug trafficking, manufacture and consumption, the majority of statistical data is unknown, owing largely to how region states have failed to properly combat the rising crisis. The information that is available is based on seizures of drugs and is thus unreliable as it neither exhaustively indicates the availability of drugs or their source. The problem is aggravated by the diversity of claims about West Africa's role in the global trade. The inescapable reality that takes shape is that West Africa's involvement in the drug trade has always been the result of severe economic despair coupled with arguably the most favorable geo-political conditions for illegal economic activity in the world. The symbiosis of these two factors combined with international policing now having a stranglehold on the traditional trafficking routes has forced criminal organizations to turn to West Africa, through which strategic pathways to Europe lie, and has therein led to the drug trafficking 'surge' we now see in the status quo.

Ghana

Ghana stands as a prime example of narcotics influence. As late as the 1980s, the people of Ghana were not at all familiar with substances such as heroin or cocaine yet in 1992 alone 1774 drug deals were reported to have occurred in Ghana. This sudden surge was attributed to Nigerian influence. Ghanaian economy went into recession during this time and the severity of the crisis is exemplified in the weekly fluctuations of their currency. Consistent with the trends established in Nigeria, small businessman turned to the drug trade which yielded quick results. By 2003, Ghanaian cannabis produced 4-7 billion USD via trade with Canada and was British Columbia's most profitable agricultural product.

## **West African Drug Trade in the Status Quo**

### **Magnitude of the Issue**

As economic depreciation has continued to plague the region, the reliance on the ever profitable drug trade has in turn reached unprecedented heights. About a quarter to two-thirds of that cocaine is on its way from South America to Europe passes through West African countries, specifically Cape

Verde, Mali, Benin, Togo, Nigeria, Guinea-Bissau, and Ghana. Proliferation within West Africa is now stronger than ever with growing demand for cocaine in the European market the UN reckons that cocaine worth \$1.25 billion passes through West Africa every year, more than the national budgets of several countries in the region. The trade, in and of itself, is even more profitable. Serving as evidence of the diverse plethora of estimation, international trade deals in cocaine in Guinea Bissau have exceeded \$2 billion which is just under twice the GDP of the country. The lucrative nature of this illegal

economy incites violence especially as total revenue earned through dealings in the European market could be as high as \$20 billion. The Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA) found West Africa accounts for 10-12% of global illegal narcotics trade which the of the equivalent of \$30-40 billion. The abrupt shift from limited entrepreneurial trafficking networks in Guinea Bissau to bulk transshipment of cocaine through West Africa is related to an overall shift in the international cocaine market and the development of newer and



THREAT ASSESSMENT:  
COCAINE TRAFFICKING IN WEST AFRICA

*Route: from South America to Europe*

*Source: South America (Colombia and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of))*

*Vector to West Africa: Sea, air*

*Vector within West Africa: Land, air*

*Volume: 20 tons*

*Value at destination: US\$ 1 billion*

*Groups involved: Colombian, Nigerian, other West African, European*

*Residence of traffickers: Colombia, Spain, other European countries*

*Estimated trend: Declining*

*Potential effects in region: Rising cocaine use, economic destabilization, corruption, violence*

*Likelihood of effects being realised: Unknown*

*Potential effects outside region: Rising cocaine use in Europe*

*Likelihood of effects being realised: High*

more profitable markets outside North America. Principally, the use of West Africa as a transshipment region is linked to the rapid expansion of the European cocaine market. The market for cocaine in Western Europe has expanded dramatically in recent years, and while North America still continues to be the largest consumer of cocaine, with nearly seven million users annually, the Western European market currently holds 3.9 million cocaine users, with an annual demand of between 135 to 145 metric tons of cocaine. The number of couriers entering European airports rose as West Africa became a transshipment region for bulk cocaine: from 2004 to 2008, more than 1,300 couriers were detected coming into Europe via commercial airlines, and between 2006 and 2008, over two metric tons of cocaine were seized from couriers flying into European airports.

As mentioned before, the data that the international community is privy to is mostly dependent on seizure data, i.e. stockpiles of drugs and narcotics that have been found in the region. However, the corruption within the West African region's law enforcement agencies has obscured much of that data and has raised questions

about its validity. However seizure data does bring to light some of the bold claims made about the magnitude of the drug trade in Western Africa. In 2007, UNODC produced a special report on cocaine trafficking in West Africa, which cited how the trade was poisoning the societies and fragile economies further concluding that several states in the region were at risk of being captured by criminal organizations. Beginning to bring data to these dramatic assertions, the report noted that in the three year period 2005–2007, some 33 tons of cocaine bound for Europe was seized in West Africa, whereas previously reported seizures were no more than 1 ton annually. UNODC further asserted that these 33 tons were likely the tip of the iceberg given the poor interdiction capacity in the region. Between 2005 and 2007, a series of more than 20 major seizures were made in the West African region, involving thousands of kilograms of cocaine. Most of the seizures were made at sea, but some involved private aircraft or caches detected on land. Out of the 5.7 tons of cocaine seized in 2007, 99% were reported from Western African countries: 2.4 ton were seized in Senegal in June, almost 1.5 tons

were seized in Mauritania between May and August, 0.6 tons in Guinea-Bissau in April, 0.5 tons in Cape Verde in March, 0.4 tons in Benin in August and 0.2 tons in Guinea. In 2006, two seizures in Western Africa, one made in Ghana (1.9 tons) and one Guinea-Bissau (0.6 ton), accounted for 90% of all seizures reported so far on the continent

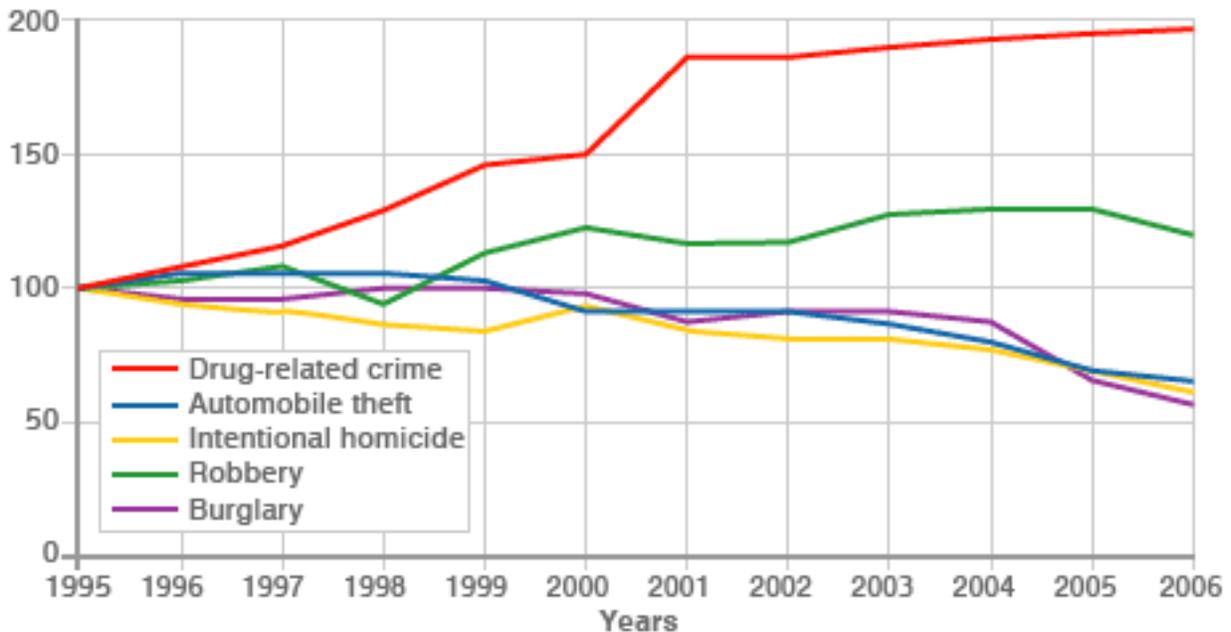
### Narco-Centric Criminalisation

The situation's immense gravity is also accentuated by the rapid criminalization that occurs parallel to the rise in the profitability of the narco culture. Nowhere is this better exemplified than in West Africa's resident narco state, Guinea Bissau. The structural weakness of the state and the corruptibility of state actors and political elites allowed foreign trafficking groups to operate with almost undisputed autonomy, even to the point where some traffickers establish a physical presence in the country, evidenced by the purchase of up-scale estates and the unprecedented surge of luxury vehicles and establishment of drug haciendas which dot the streets in the midst of the grueling poverty. There are many instances of military resources being

used in facilitating bulk shipments of cocaine into the country; there are multiple reports of soldiers using military resources to transport cocaine within Guinea-Bissau, of aircraft delivering bulk shipments through military airfields, as well as the disappearance of hundreds of kilos of the drug from official custody. The international community is now well aware of the newly developed stranglehold that criminal factions and non-state actors have on the socio-economic sphere in West Africa. The precedent for state-enabled trafficking, which often entails bribery, corruption, and the abetting of criminals, is overwhelming. Corruption of government officials and public office holders by out rightly buying their services by offering them shareholder stakes in the proceeds of the criminal trade in drugs, thereby making the abuse of executive machinery an integral part of the systematic approach to narco-trafficking. In this way, drug trafficking and high-level-corruption become symbiotic. Examples abound in daily news reports of law and security officials being bribed at different stages of the drugs trade in order to buy their silence, acquiescence, or complicity. In Nigeria, for example, in 2005, Mr. Bello

## Trends in selected types of police-recorded crime in countries consistently reporting

basis: 1995=100



SOURCE: World Drug Report 2009, UNODC

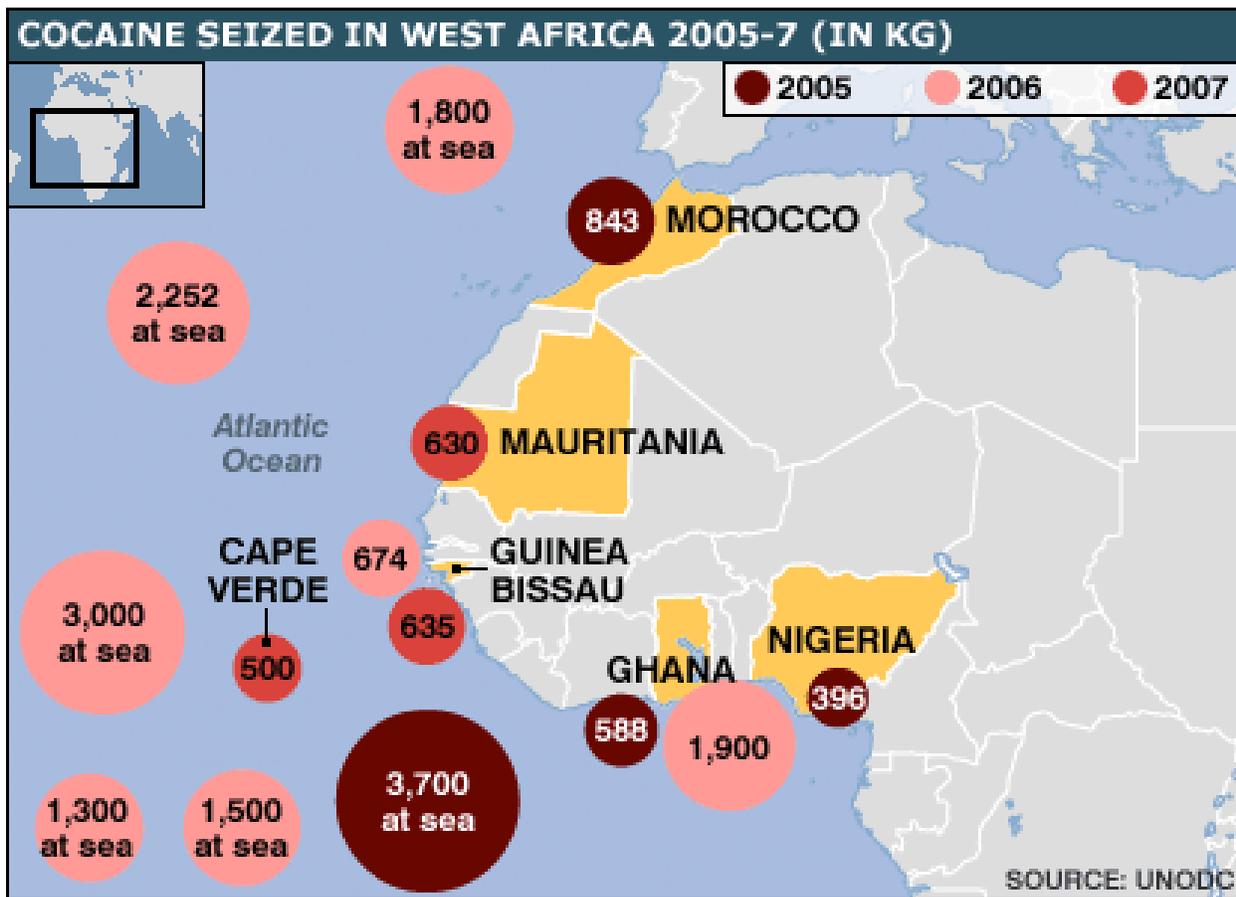
Lafiaji, the head of the country's drug law enforcement agency was dismissed by the then President, Olusegun Obasanjo, along with one of his closest aides on account of allegations of corruption and abuse of office. In Nigeria, a cartel of drug law enforcement officials reportedly facilitated the release of some 197 drug convicts from prison between 2005 and 2006.

The perversion of the justice system is blatant and overt with instances of disruption of criminal procedure, undermining of police investigation and even facilitation of jailbreaks. All of this is aggravated by the corrosion of the

electoral process wherein individuals attain and conversely cede power on the basis of their ability to cater to and protect the interest of a narrow yet aggressively dominant lobby of criminals that dictate how the country functions as exemplified by the crisis in Mali and the 2012 coup in Guinea-Bissau which are both partly connected with the drugs trade, especially in terms of the involvement of state actors. By the end of 2008 states such as Nigeria, Guinea Bissau and several others emerged as major trafficking hubs with billions pouring in and out of illegal economies whilst simultaneously establishing

transnational organized crime as a threat to national sovereignty and domestic control. Yet the influence as now spread. a recent report by the US State Department said that Kenya is developing into a major money-laundering country, owing to lax tax regulations; the report claimed that the country's financial system may be laundering more than \$100 million every year in narcotics proceeds. In 2010, a staggering \$2.1 billion (equivalent to 3.8% of GDP, or nearly half of Kenya's total exports) found its way into the Kenyan

economy without the government being able to explain its source. Debates about the extent to which this amount might consist of laundered ransom moneys from piracy, remittances, drug money, or other proceeds of crime remain unresolved. Kenya exemplifies not just the enormity of the problem but that of the immense power of the drug trade as well as the factions that lead it. Halting the money laundering in Kenya according to local reports would actually weaken the economy and prevent



its growth. In essence, the livelihood of the Kenyan people lies in an illegal economy fueled by criminal factions.

Cocaine and cannabis trafficking and its rapid success sparked local interest in drug production, something that the region is relatively inexperienced with, particularly large scale production. Today, methamphetamine and MDMA trafficked to South-east Asia, precipitating in millions in profit. Shortly after the 2008 coup in Guinea, the military government invited the international community to inspect a manufacturing operation they alleged had been linked to the Conté regime. More than 5,000 liters of sassafras oil and 80 liters of P2P were discovered, primary precursors for MDMA (ecstasy) synthesis. In one of the two locations where the chemicals were found (Kissosso), forensic analysis confirmed the presence of MDMA in a high-pressure reaction vessel, suggesting that some production had already occurred. Four large-scale crystal meth labs have been discovered in Nigeria. Shipments of precursor chemicals have been seized in neighboring Benin and Togo and in Guinea officials discovered huge vats used to cook MDMA, a similar synthetic drug.

## Impact on the Civilian Body

With West Africa engrossed in the narco culture, it is not surprising that civilians have not only justified the mass proliferation of narcotics across the nations but also contribute greatly to its success in the market. Though the consumption of recreational drugs has remained a cultural norm within the region for centuries, the new surge has accentuated the several health and safety hazards associated with drug abuse and has now precipitated in an epidemic. Major public health problems from drug use are going untreated. The passage of cocaine, heroin, and amphetamines through West Africa is leading to increased drug use, especially among younger generations. Of the estimated 1.8 million people who inject drugs in West Africa, 11.8 percent are living with HIV. Today, Senegal is the only country in the region that offers programs to prevent the spread of HIV and hepatitis among users. Moreover, in West Africa, policies towards drug users are centered predominantly on punitive measures, with tough sentencing for first-time users. Limited steps are taken to treat users while in prison, or support reintegration and

rehabilitation efforts upon release. According to the Global Commission on Drug Policy, evidence has shown that repressive drug law enforcement practices can drive users from accessing public health services, possibly pushing them into environments with elevated risk for diseases, including HIV. In this regard, there are increasing calls for treatment rather than imprisonment for drug users. Conversely, treatment for drug addiction across West Africa is generally under-resourced and under-funded, with institutions ill-prepared to deal with rising levels of dependency, and potential spillovers such as increases in HIV-AIDS. Health facilities across the region are either non-existent or under-equipped, and staffs are not trained to deal with the consequences of drug dependency.

Data remains scarce yet the limited information that does reach the mainstream points to incremental changes in drug consumption across the region. UNODC estimates that cocaine use in West Africa and Central Africa is significantly higher than the global average when adjusted for population size. The estimated absolute number of people who used

cocaine in the region was 1.6 million in 2012 (with a wide confidence interval of 570,000 to 2.4 million owing to few credible data reports). The 2013 report also noted an emerging market for methamphetamine in Africa, an assessment, it remarks, that is borne out by increasing diversions of precursors, seizures and methamphetamine manufacture in the region. In West Africa, much more cannabis is consumed than cocaine, heroin or ATS. According to UNODC reports, the estimated prevalence of cannabis use in the adult population is highest in West and Central Africa, at 12.4 percent, compared to the averages of 7.5 percent in Africa and 3.9 percent globally.

The social impacts of excessive and undocumented drug abuse are numerous and include reduced productivity, premature mortality and added fiscal pressure on the legal system. A report by the UN Secretary General in June 2013 also noted the impact of use of illicit narcotics on the prevalence rate of HIV in West Africa. For example, in Senegal, 9.1 percent of people who inject drugs were living with HIV, compared with under 1% of the general population, and about 4 percent of new HIV infections in Ghana were

attributed to injecting drug use.<sup>96</sup> The report also highlighted an analysis in 2007 of the modes of HIV transmission in Nigeria, which showed that injecting drug use had contributed to 9.1 percent of new infections, with the prevalence of HIV among people who inject drugs estimated at 5.6 percent. More recent research concluded that 27.7 percent of people who used drugs in Senegal have injected drugs at some time.<sup>97</sup> These findings are alarming in light of the fact that the 2013 Global Report of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) reported a decline of 34 percent in the annual number of new HIV infections among adults in sub-Saharan Africa since 2001. In fact, HIV incidence declined by more than 50 percent between 2001 and 2012 in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Senegal.

## **Questions a Resolution Must Answer**

-What does the drug trade in West Africa entail, and how should the aspects that fall under its umbrella be defined?

What are the problems caused by this illicit trade of drugs?

-Which drugs are of the most relevance contextualized within this region of West Africa?

-How does the illicit drug/arms trade benefit extremist groups in Africa?

-What previous documentation, including past United Nations resolutions, have already been brought to the table regarding this issue?

-Where do these documents falter in aiming to curb the crisis at hand?

-What current methods are being implemented to counter the illicit drug and arms trade?

-Why are these current methods to counter illicit drug and arms trade not working?

- What possible solutions may be practical to implement in order to efficiently tackle the problem