

BACKGROUND GUIDE

UNODC



MUNI MUN

2026

Letter from the Secretariat.....	2
Advancing Comprehensive International Responses to Drug Trafficking and Demand Reduction.....	4
Background.....	4
Defining the issue.....	4
Historical background.....	5
International framework.....	5
Current state of the issue.....	6
Key points of tension.....	6
Link to the committee.....	7
Strengthening International Measures to Combat Maritime Crime (Piracy, Smuggling, and Illegal Fishing).....	9
Background.....	9
Defining the issue.....	9
Historical background.....	9
International framework.....	10
Current state of the issue.....	11
Key points of tension.....	11
Link to the committee.....	12
Research and Preparation questions.....	13
Bibliography.....	14



Letter from the Secretariat

Dear Delegates,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the 2026 edition of the Masaryk University Model United Nations Conference. As Secretary General, it is an immense privilege to witness the incredible passion and dedication each of you will bring to this conference.

As our motto suggests, our aim for this year is to help delegates lead, think, and be inspired. In accordance with this goal, we have curated a diverse selection of committees and topics that ensure heated debate and the need for compromise. We hope that each delegate can take advantage of the unique space that MUNs bring, one where ideas are tested, diplomacy is practiced, and perspectives are broadened.

On behalf of the entire MUNIMUN team, I wish you the best of luck in your preparations and sincerely hope you have fun at the end of the day.

Do not forget that we are here to help ensure that your experience at MUNIMUN is the best that it can be. Should you have any questions, comments, concerns, or any other statements, please do not hesitate to contact me, your chairs, or the general MUNIMUN email.

I look forward to seeing the energy you bring to this conference and the lasting memories you will create.

Best wishes,

Kerem Efe Özen

Secretary General

BACKGROUND GUIDE

UNODC



TOPIC A:
ADVANCING COMPREHENSIVE
INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES TO
DRUG TRAFFICKING AND
DEMAND REDUCTION



Advancing Comprehensive International Responses to Drug Trafficking and Demand Reduction

Background

Defining the issue

Drug trafficking is defined as the illicit production, manufacture, transit, distribution, and sale of restricted substances in violation of national and international drug control regulations. It is a key component of transnational organized crime, with sophisticated cross-border supply chains linking crop zones, manufacturing laboratories, transportation corridors, and consumer markets on various continents. Drug trafficking, unlike exclusively domestic criminal acts, has a worldwide scope. Cocaine cultivation in one region, cocaine processing in another, shipments passing through multiple states, and final consumption in distant markets all demonstrate the global drug economy's intricate interconnectedness.

The drugs used go well beyond typical opiates like heroin and cocaine. Modern trafficking networks are increasingly focused on synthetic drugs such as methamphetamine and MDMA, as well as synthetic opioids and novel psychoactive substances (NPS). The introduction of synthetic pharmaceuticals has changed global drug markets because they can be made anywhere with access to precursor chemicals, making trafficking less reliant on specific geographic cultivation zones. This move complicates international monitoring and enforcement measures.

In contrast, demand reduction programs try to prevent drug use, reduce reliance, and mitigate the social and health repercussions of substance addiction. Prevention campaigns, public education programs, early intervention measures, rehabilitation services, harm reduction initiatives, and long-term reintegration methods are all examples of demand-reduction approaches. Over the last few decades, international debate has increasingly highlighted that drug use should be regarded as a public health and development matter, rather than just a criminal justice issue. This emerging understanding reflects an acknowledgement that punitive tactics have not eliminated drug use and, in some circumstances, have increased social marginalization.

The topic of drug trafficking and demand reduction is important internationally as it overlaps with a number of global challenges. Drug trafficking generates massive illicit financial flows, threatening economic stability, fueling corruption, and weakening governance mechanisms. In other areas, drug proceeds fund armed groups or contribute to political unrest. At the same time, drug addiction has a huge impact on healthcare systems, job markets, and social welfare organizations. Because supply lines, financial transactions, and criminal networks traverse borders, no state can successfully address the issue alone. Comprehensive international cooperation is consequently required.

Historical background

The origins of international drug control can be traced back to the early twentieth century, when concerns about the opium trade drove multinational regulatory initiatives. The 1912 Hague Opium Convention was one of the earliest coordinated efforts by states to regulate narcotic substances. Following the foundation of the United Nations, drug control became more formalized within the burgeoning global governance structure.

The contemporary worldwide drug control regime is largely based on three key United Nations conventions: the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and the 1988 Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances. Together, these treaties created a comprehensive legal framework that required states to limit drug production to medicinal and scientific objectives while criminalizing illicit manufacturing and trafficking. The treaties also created monitoring and reporting mechanisms to ensure compliance.

During the late twentieth century, worldwide drug policy was greatly impacted by prohibitionist measures known as the "war on drugs." This age prioritized law enforcement, eradication campaigns, and harsh criminal penalties. Large-scale eradication initiatives focused on coca and opium cultivation in Latin America and Asia, while interdiction techniques aimed to disrupt trafficking networks. Although these efforts led to considerable arrests and seizures, critics claim that they did not significantly lower worldwide demand and, in certain areas, exacerbated violence, prison congestion, and human rights concerns.

Over time, evidence grew that merely punitive tactics were ineffective. By the early twenty-first century, the international community had recognized the need for more balanced tactics that included health, human rights, and development perspectives. The United Nations General Assembly Special Sessions (UNGASS) on the global drug problem have increasingly highlighted comprehensive methods that include supply reduction, demand reduction, and international cooperation.

International framework

The three UN drug conventions serve as the foundation for today's international drug control framework. These treaties are practically universally approved, ranking among the most extensively used international legal instruments. The accords stipulate duties for criminalization, extradition, mutual legal assistance, precursor chemical regulation, and asset forfeiture. They also establish institutional monitoring through organizations like the International Narcotics Control Board.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is a key operational partner in nations' efforts to combat drug trafficking and improve prevention and treatment programs. It offers technical help, supports capacity-building programs, gathers global data, and promotes cross-border cooperation. Furthermore, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) serves as the UN system's key policymaking body for drug-related matters.

Aside from treaty duties, multiple Security Council resolutions have targeted drug trafficking in situations when it undermines international peace and security, notably in conflict-affected areas. Regional organizations like the European Union, the Organization of American States, and the African Union have also devised coordinated drug control policies.

Despite the broad structure, execution is patchy. While many states legally comply with treaty obligations, inequalities in enforcement capacity, governance quality, and resources result in gaps in effectiveness. Furthermore, disagreements about the interpretation of the conventions continue, particularly in light of recent national policies that legalize or decriminalize specific narcotics.

Current state of the issue

Today's global medication marketplaces are diverse, technologically advanced, and more complex. Synthetic drug production has increased dramatically, decreasing dependency on traditional crop-based narcotics. The proliferation of internet marketplaces and encrypted communication systems has allowed traffickers to operate more anonymously and efficiently. Cryptocurrencies have made illicit financial transactions easier, undermining anti-money laundering operations.

Global drug usage remains high. Millions of people worldwide suffer from substance use disorders, and overdose deaths have become a major public health concern in numerous areas. The opioid crisis, particularly with synthetic opioids, has emphasized the horrific human cost of drug abuse.

Regional trends differ greatly. Some locations are predominantly production hubs, while others serve as transportation corridors or consumer marketplaces. In some countries, drug trafficking fuels organized crime, violence, and corruption. In others, the key task is to combat rising addiction rates and improve treatment access.

At the same time, novel policy initiatives have appeared. Several states have adopted harm reduction programs, extended treatment options, or experimented with decriminalization models. These innovations have fueled a global debate about the most effective and ethical ways to drug control.

Key points of tension

One major source of disagreement is the balance between punitive enforcement and public health interventions. Some states promote strong prohibition and criminal sanctions, while others focus on damage reduction and decriminalization. This disparity complicates efforts to achieve consistent international coordination.

Another tension emerges between sovereignty and international duties. States have discretion in enacting drug control measures, although they are constrained by treaty commitments. As national policies change, particularly in terms of cannabis legislation, questions about treaty interpretation and revision emerge.

Structural challenges further hinder progress. Poverty, inequality, poor governance, and inadequate healthcare infrastructure can promote both trafficking and demand. In some areas, alternative livelihoods for communities participating in illegal crop growing are insufficient, making eradication attempts economically unsustainable.

The internationalization of digital technologies hampers police operations. Law enforcement must adapt to increasingly complex trafficking tactics while upholding privacy and human rights requirements.

Link to the committee

The subject of establishing comprehensive international solutions to drug trafficking and demand reduction is squarely within the purview of this committee given to its transnational nature and intersection with security, development, and human rights concerns. The committee's mission is to enable discourse, promote balanced policy frameworks, foster international cooperation, and develop capacity-building activities.

Delegates should evaluate not only enforcement techniques, but also preventive measures, health-focused initiatives, sustainable development considerations, and cross-border collaboration structures. The committee may help by establishing coordinated worldwide standards, encouraging data sharing, funding alternative development projects, and creating open discourse about changing policy approaches.

Finally, tackling drug trafficking and demand reduction necessitates a comprehensive and collaborative approach. The issue's complexity necessitates approaches that consider law enforcement, public health, development, and human rights viewpoints. As global drug markets evolve, so should the international community's strategy.

BACKGROUND GUIDE

UNODC



TOPIC B:
**STRENGTHENING
INTERNATIONAL MEASURES TO
COMBAT MARITIME CRIME**

Strengthening International Measures to Combat Maritime Crime (Piracy, Smuggling, and Illegal Fishing)

Background

Defining the issue

Maritime crime encompasses a wide range of criminal operations carried out at sea or in coastal waters that contravene international law, state jurisdiction, or existing maritime rules. These crimes take place across seas, territorial waterways, exclusive economic zones (EEZs), and strategic maritime chokepoints, and they frequently involve international criminal networks. Piracy, armed robbery at sea, human trafficking, migrant smuggling, sea-based drug trafficking, illicit fishing, marine environmental crimes, arms smuggling, and maritime terrorism are all examples of maritime crime.

The marine sector is critical to the world economy. Over 80% of global trade by volume is transported by sea, making maritime routes vital arteries of world business. Major maritime lanes such as the Strait of Hormuz, the Strait of Malacca, the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, and the Suez Canal act as strategic chokepoints, with disruptions having direct global effects. Maritime crime thus affects more than just specific coastal states; it also poses systemic hazards to international trade, global supply chains, food security, and energy markets.

Piracy and armed robbery at sea are violent activities conducted against ships for private benefit, which frequently include hijacking vessels, kidnapping sailors for ransom, or stealing cargo. Human traffickers and migrant smugglers routinely use marine channels to carry vulnerable people across perilous waterways. Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing degrades marine ecosystems, harms coastal populations' livelihoods, and jeopardizes food security. Maritime environmental crimes, such as illegal hazardous waste dumping and oil spills caused by negligence or criminal activity, exacerbate ecological degradation.

The multinational nature of maritime spaces affects law enforcement activities. While governments have authority over their territorial waters, significant areas of the ocean are under international jurisdiction. The high seas, which are controlled by international law, present unique issues due to limited enforcement power and jurisdictional ambiguity. As a result, marine crime requires coordinated international measures encompassing security, environmental governance, economic regulation, and human rights protections.

Historical background

Piracy dates back to old trade routes, therefore maritime crime has been around for ages. Piracy has always thrived during periods of lax naval policing and vigorous commercial competitiveness. In the early modern period, privateering blurred the distinction between state-sanctioned maritime combat and illicit piracy. Over time, however, the international community evolved

standards that condemned piracy as *hostis humani generis*, or an enemy of all mankind, establishing universal jurisdiction over piracy acts.

The codification of modern maritime law began in earnest during the twentieth century. Following the formation of the United Nations, efforts to control marine behavior culminated in the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in 1982. UNCLOS created extensive laws for territorial waters, exclusive economic zones, high seas, and navigational rights. It also defined piracy in international law and emphasized states' responsibility to resist it.

The late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries saw a renewed focus on maritime crime as piracy occurrences increased off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden. Piracy in the Horn of Africa increased dramatically between 2008 and 2012, damaging global shipping and necessitating coordinated naval operations. Multinational task teams, especially those led by NATO and the European Union, have dramatically reduced piracy in impacted areas through patrols, escort missions, and capacity-building programs.

However, marine crime has changed rather than disappearing. While Somali piracy decreased, incidences in the Gulf of Guinea surged, with attacks frequently including violent kidnappings for ransom. Illegal fishing surged at the same time that world fish stocks fell and demand rose. Advances in technology, such as GPS navigation and satellite communication, have made both legitimate maritime trade and criminal networks more efficient.

International framework

The basic legal framework that governs maritime operations is the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). UNCLOS establishes jurisdictional zones, defines piracy, and requires governments to collaborate in combating piracy on the high seas. It confers universal jurisdiction over piracy, allowing any state to seize pirate ships and prosecute perpetrators.

In addition to UNCLOS, several other international treaties cover marine crime. The SUA Convention criminalizes maritime terrorism and violence against ships. The International marine Organization (IMO) is a key player in promoting marine safety and security standards, such as the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS).

Regional accords enhance global frameworks. For example, the Djibouti Code of Conduct covers piracy in the Western Indian Ocean, and the Yaoundé Code of Conduct concentrates on marine security in the Gulf of Guinea. These agreements encourage information exchange, collaborative patrolling, and regional cooperation.

Despite the availability of legal instruments, there are still major enforcement gaps. Many coastal jurisdictions lack the necessary naval capability, surveillance technology, and judicial infrastructure to effectively prosecute maritime offenders. Furthermore, jurisdictional issues frequently delay or prohibit prosecution. The allocation of duty among flag nations, coastal states, port states, and international agencies can result in fragmented responses.

Current state of the issue

Maritime crime continues to be a diverse and evolving concern. While large-scale piracy off Somalia has reduced dramatically since its height, pirate events continue in other places, particularly the Gulf of Guinea. These attacks typically include armed gangs attacking oil tankers or kidnapping crew members for ransom.

Illegal, unreported, and uncontrolled fishing has become one of the most common types of maritime crime. It leads to the loss of global fish stocks, threatens marine biodiversity, and deprives coastal states of billions of dollars in revenue each year. In poor nations, IUU fishing can worsen poverty and food insecurity.

Maritime channels are also often used for drug, weapon, and human trafficking. Criminal networks take advantage of weak border controls and inadequate maritime surveillance capabilities. Small vessels, cargo ships, and fishing boats are frequently utilized to convey illicit items over long distances.

Technological improvements have presented both benefits and challenges. Satellite tracking, maritime domain awareness systems, and automated identification systems (AIS) have enhanced monitoring capabilities. However, traffickers and pirates have reacted by disabling tracking systems, faking ship papers, and taking advantage of legal loopholes.

Climate change may hamper marine security. Melting Arctic ice is opening up new maritime routes, which could lead to new chances for both legitimate and illegal activity. Rising sea levels and environmental deterioration may potentially erode coastal governance mechanisms, increasing vulnerability to criminal networks.

Key points of tension

One important point of contention is the balance between freedom of passage and increased security enforcement. While states aim to preserve maritime trade and open sea lanes, excessive security measures may impair commercial flows or violate sovereign rights.

Disparities in capacity create another source of friction. Developed maritime powers frequently have advanced naval forces and surveillance systems, but many developing coastal states lack basic enforcement facilities. This disparity raises concerns about burden-sharing and equitable foreign assistance.

Enforcement is further complicated by jurisdictional conflicts. Determining whether jurisdiction has the authority to prosecute maritime crimes can cause delays in justice and enable culprits to avoid consequences. Furthermore, prosecuting piracy and maritime terrorism frequently necessitates complicated evidence collecting and international collaboration.

Environmental concerns mix with security considerations. Measures to counteract illegal fishing must be balanced with the protection of small-scale fishermen's incomes. Enforcement activities must also adhere to human rights norms, particularly in cases involving migrants and asylum seekers at sea.

Link to the committee

This committee's remit includes the subject of marine crime, which has direct repercussions for international peace and security, sustainable development, environmental protection, and global economic stability. Maritime crime undermines maritime law and jeopardizes international commerce routes, which are critical to global wealth.

The committee's role is to improve international coordination, support capacity-building programs, foster information-sharing channels, and enhance legislative frameworks. It can also help with long-term development plans that address the underlying causes of maritime crime, such as poverty, governance gaps, and economic marginalization in coastal regions.

Delegates should approach this matter holistically, realizing that effective responses must include security operations, legal harmonization, technology innovation, environmental governance, and development aid. Strengthening international measures necessitates not only naval enforcement but also judicial collaboration, data transparency, and community-based resilience solutions.



Research and Preparation questions

Topic A: Advancing Comprehensive International Responses to Drug Trafficking and Demand Reduction

1. How can the international community develop a truly comprehensive and coordinated framework that effectively integrates both supply reduction and demand reduction strategies?
2. What mechanisms can strengthen international cooperation in disrupting transnational trafficking networks, particularly in intelligence sharing, financial monitoring, and cross-border law enforcement?
3. How can states more effectively target illicit financial flows and enhance mutual legal assistance and asset recovery processes linked to drug trafficking?
4. Should substance use be addressed primarily as a criminal justice issue, a public health issue, or through an integrated model combining both approaches?
5. How can drug control policies ensure the protection of human rights, particularly for vulnerable populations affected by enforcement measures?
6. How should the international community respond to the rapid expansion of synthetic drugs, new psychoactive substances, and the use of digital technologies and cryptocurrencies in trafficking?
7. How can long-term solutions—such as alternative development programs and sustainable prevention strategies—be designed to address the root causes of both drug production and demand?

Topic B: Strengthening International Measures to Combat Maritime Crime (Piracy, Smuggling, and Illegal Fishing)

1. Are existing international legal frameworks, particularly under UNCLOS, sufficient to combat maritime crime, or are additional protocols and enforcement mechanisms necessary?
2. How can international and regional cooperation be strengthened to improve joint patrols, intelligence sharing, prosecution efforts, and sustainable capacity-building in high-risk maritime regions?
3. How can jurisdictional challenges in prosecuting maritime criminals be resolved more effectively, including questions surrounding universal jurisdiction and harmonization of legal standards?
4. How can maritime crime be addressed while simultaneously protecting freedom of navigation and respecting state sovereignty?
5. In what ways can illegal fishing and other maritime crimes be tackled without undermining the livelihoods of legitimate small-scale coastal communities?
6. How can emerging technologies—such as satellite monitoring, maritime domain awareness systems, and digital tracking tools—be leveraged to combat maritime crime while safeguarding privacy and commercial confidentiality?
7. As climate change reshapes maritime routes and opens new areas to exploitation, what preventive and multilateral strategies are needed to avoid the emergence of new maritime crime hotspots?

Bibliography

- Drug trafficking. (n.d.). United Nations: Office on Drugs and Crime.
<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/drug-trafficking/index.html>
- The 1912 Hague International Opium Convention. (n.d.). United Nations: Office on Drugs and Crime.
<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/the-1912-hague-international-opium-convention.html>
- War on Drugs | Law | Research Starters | EBSCO Research. (n.d.). EBSCO.
<https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/law/war-drugs>
- World Drug Problem. (n.d.). United Nations: Office on Drugs and Crime.
<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/drugs/world-drug-problem.html>
- UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME Vienna WORLD DRUG REPORT 2025. (2025). In UNODC(E.25.XI.5). UNODC.
https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/WDR_2025/WDR25_B1_Key_findings.pdf
- STATE-LEVEL MARIJUANA REFORM: LESSONS LEARNED AND ONGOING CHALLENGES. (2025). In DRUG POLICY ALLIANCE. DRUG POLICY ALLIANCE.
https://drugpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/DPA-StateLevelMJReport_InDesign-07.29.2025.pdf?utm
- Explainer: What is maritime crime? (n.d.). United Nations: Office on Drugs and Crime.
https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2025/June/explainer_what-is-maritime-crime.html
- Shipping data: UNCTAD releases new seaborne trade statistics. (2025, April 23). UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD).
<https://unctad.org/news/shipping-data-unctad-releases-new-seaborne-trade-statistics>
- Maritime crime and piracy. (n.d.). United Nations: UNODC ROMENA.
<https://www.unodc.org/romena/en/maritime-crime-and-piracy.html>
- Ferragamo, M. (2026, February 23). The Strait of Hormuz: a U.S.-Iran maritime flash point. Council on Foreign Relations.
<https://www.cfr.org/articles/strait-hormuz-us-iran-maritime-flash-point>
- United Nations. (1982). United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.
https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf

Akar, Ç. (2022). The development of piracy in the Horn of Africa. *Journal of Marine and Engineering Technology*, 2(1), 31–39.
<https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/2440019>

Mahmood, O. (2024, June 7). The roots of Somalia's slow piracy resurgence. *International Crisis Group*.
<https://www.crisisgroup.org/ojs/africa/somalia/roots-somalias-slow-piracy-resurgence>

United Nations. (1999). *International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism*. <https://treaties.un.org/doc/db/terrorism/conv8-english.pdf>

The Djibouti Code of Conduct. (n.d).
<https://www.imo.org/en/ourwork/security/pages/content-and-evolution-of-the-djibouti-code-of-conduct.aspx>

Deep waters: the maritime security landscape in the Gulf of Guinea. (2025, February 19). *European Union Institute for Security Studies*.
<https://www.iss.europa.eu/publications/briefs/deep-waters-maritime-security-landscape-gulf-guinea>

Maritimescrimes. (2024, October 8). Is the Gulf of Guinea at Risk? Addressing the Threat of Illegal Fishing. *Maritimes Crimes*.
<https://maritimescrimes.com/2024/09/23/is-the-gulf-of-guinea-at-risk-addressing-the-threat-of-illegal-fishing/>.