

## **Addressing the systematic illicit production and export of synthetic opioids by state and non-state actors.**

Synthetic opioids are substances purposely fabricated in order to simulate naturally occurring opioids. Principal effects include pain relief, muscle relaxation, euphoric states. For these qualities, these substances are commonly used in medical fields in order to relieve pain and help with further recovery.

Today, the most commonly misused synthetic opioid is fentanyl, which is a synthetic substance, 50x more addictive than heroin, with a very high risk of overdose and death. Firstly manufactured in 1959, it was primarily used in hospitals to provide pain relief during operations, or during terminal stages of cancer. In 2022, up to 73 000 Americans have died due to fentanyl overdose. In 2023, fentanyl was the cause of 70% of total drug overdoses in the USA. Its common abuse today can be explained by many factors, such as the consequences of the American opioid crisis, or its cheaper and notably easier production in comparison to, for example, heroin.

The legal export of synthetic opioids is maintained according to governmental bodies and international governmental organisations. However illegal drug smuggling for the black market is a long lasting problem with fatal consequences. The illicit import and export is mainly arranged by organised crime groups, who smuggle synthetic opioids, notably fentanyl through the state borders. Illicit smuggling is mainly done by commercial traffic, in passenger vehicles or by pedestrians or individuals with pills strapped to their bodies. In similar manners, chemicals are smuggled from Asian countries-particularly China and India to western countries and USA to be furtherly used for illegal synthetic opioid production.

China is generally considered as the principal illicit opioid producer. It is difficult to exactly determine the exact quantities of fentanyl and other synthetic opioids fabricated. Usually, drug labs are located in rental facilities in rural areas.

Keeping in mind formerly mentioned information, we are led to question the reliability and correctness of the current laws regulating synthetic. The states in the drug control committee are highly encouraged to cooperate on drafting a resolution proposing modern global reforms to their currently implemented systems.

### **Questions to consider:**

- What laws does your country currently have on the production of synthetic opioids?
- How to contribute to the prevention of illegal drug smuggling?
- Does your county allow the use of synthetic opioids in the medical field? To what extent?
- Is there a correlation between synthetic opioid usage in medical fields and drug abuse in your county?

- Are synthetic opioids smuggled in/from your country? To what extent?

**Sources:**

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