



United Nations
Office on Drugs and Crime

ENHANCING CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION



BY

**STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF BORDER
LIAISON OFFICES IN CENTRAL ASIA**



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UNODC PROGRAMME FOR
CENTRAL ASIA 2022 - 2025

PREVENTING AND COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME



Afghanistan increased by 32 per cent, to 233,000 hectares – making the 2022 crop the third largest area under cultivation since monitoring began. Opium prices have soared following the announcement of the cultivation ban in April 2022. Income made by Afghan farmers from opium sales more than tripled, from US\$ 425 million in 2021 to US\$ 1.4 billion in 2022.

Drug seizure data across the region indicates an exponential increase in drug trafficking. Since August 2021, there has been a significant increase in drug seizures in Central Asian states.

To provide Central Asian states with technical assistance and to connect national and regional efforts, UNODC utilizes a mechanism of an integrated response to drug-related challenges and border security issues. The organization’s initiatives strengthen both national interagency coordination and cross-border cooperation by establishing Border Liaison Offices, border outposts, and Interagency Mobile Teams.

Fostering greater cross-border and interagency cooperation is the only way forward for achieving our shared vision to build a more inclusive and fairer future, to make the region safer from drugs and crime, and to contribute to the health of our generation and those to come.

Ashita Mittal, UNODC Regional Representative for Central Asia

The nexus of transnational organized crime and terrorism, including drug trafficking, is a concern for Central Asian states.

Drug dealers exploit substance abusers, quickly intensifying the production of substances, including extremely addictive synthetic drugs.

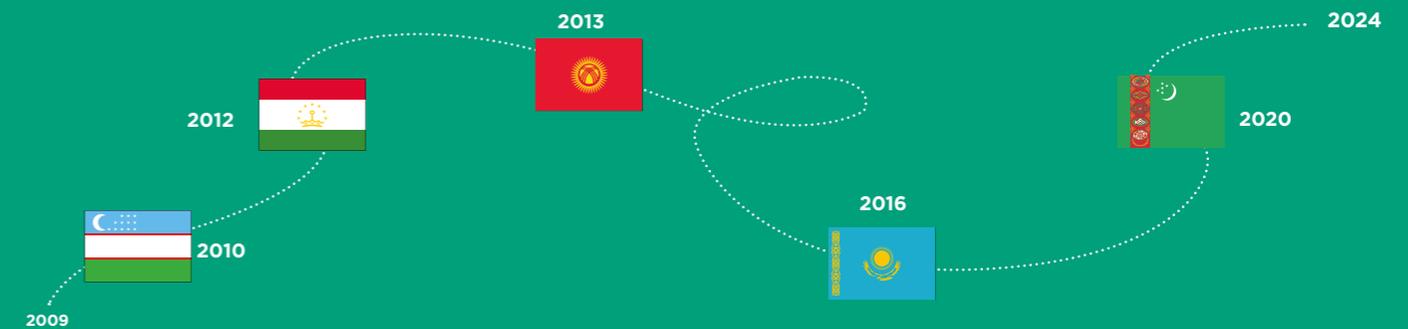
For instance, last year, cultivation of opium poppies in

UNODC REGIONAL PROJECT ON ENHANCING CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION BY STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF BORDER LIAISON OFFICES IN CENTRAL ASIA

OBJECTIVE

Border Liaison Offices promote improved communication and cooperation between different national law enforcement agencies working along the border. They also aim to foster greater law enforcement cooperation through direct cross-border communication links at the operational level, and by sharing real-time information on drug traffickers to enable fast and effective intervention by law enforcement officers on both sides of the border.

COUNTRIES AND THE START OF THE PROJECT



DONOR



PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES



NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

Border and Customs Services, Drug Control Agencies, Ministries of Internal Affairs

FRAMEWORK FOR COOPERATION



Strategy for the Development of Kazakhstan until 2030; Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On State Border of the Republic of Kazakhstan”



National Development Programme of the Kyrgyz Republic until 2026; Concept on National Security of the Kyrgyz Republic



National Border Management Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan and its Implementation Plan for 2010 - 2025



Programme “Revival of a New Epoch of the Powerful State: National Programme of Turkmenistan’s Socioeconomic Development for 2022 - 2052”



“Uzbekistan – 2030” Strategy



BORDER LIAISON OFFICES: A NEW CONCEPT FOR STRENGTHENING CROSS-BORDER LAW ENFORCEMENT COOPERATION IN CENTRAL ASIA



The strengthening of selected border crossing points and the establishment of a new system for enhanced interagency and cross-border cooperation, improved intelligence gathering and coordination on countering drug trafficking in the region - thus protecting vulnerable territories against the trafficking of Afghan opiates - are some of the key areas of cooperation for the UNODC Regional Office for Central Asia.

The UNODC Regional Project on Enhancing Cross-Border Cooperation by Strengthening the Capacity of Border Liaison Offices in Central Asia (project) of Sub-programme 1

Preventing and Countering Transnational Organized Crime of the UNODC Programme for Central Asia 2022 - 2025 is designed to strengthen the capacity of border crossing points (BCPs) and improve cross-border cooperation by promoting the concept of Border Liaison Offices (BLOs) and developing information and communication networks for border agencies.

BLOs are established at key border crossing points in the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan.



BLOs promote improved communication and cooperation between different national law enforcement agencies working along the border. They also aim to foster greater law enforcement cooperation through direct cross-border communication links at the operational level, and to promote the sharing of real-time information on drug traffickers to enable fast and effective intervention by law enforcement officers on both sides of the border.

Under this system of cooperation, UNODC has assisted with the establishment of 24 BLOs in geographically remote and potentially vulnerable border crossing points on the Kazakh-Kyrgyz (4), Kazakh-Uzbek (2), Kyrgyz-Tajik (4), Kyrgyz-Uzbek (2), Tajik-Afghan (2), Tajik-Uzbek (8), Turkmen-Uzbek (1), and Uzbek-Afghan (1) borders.

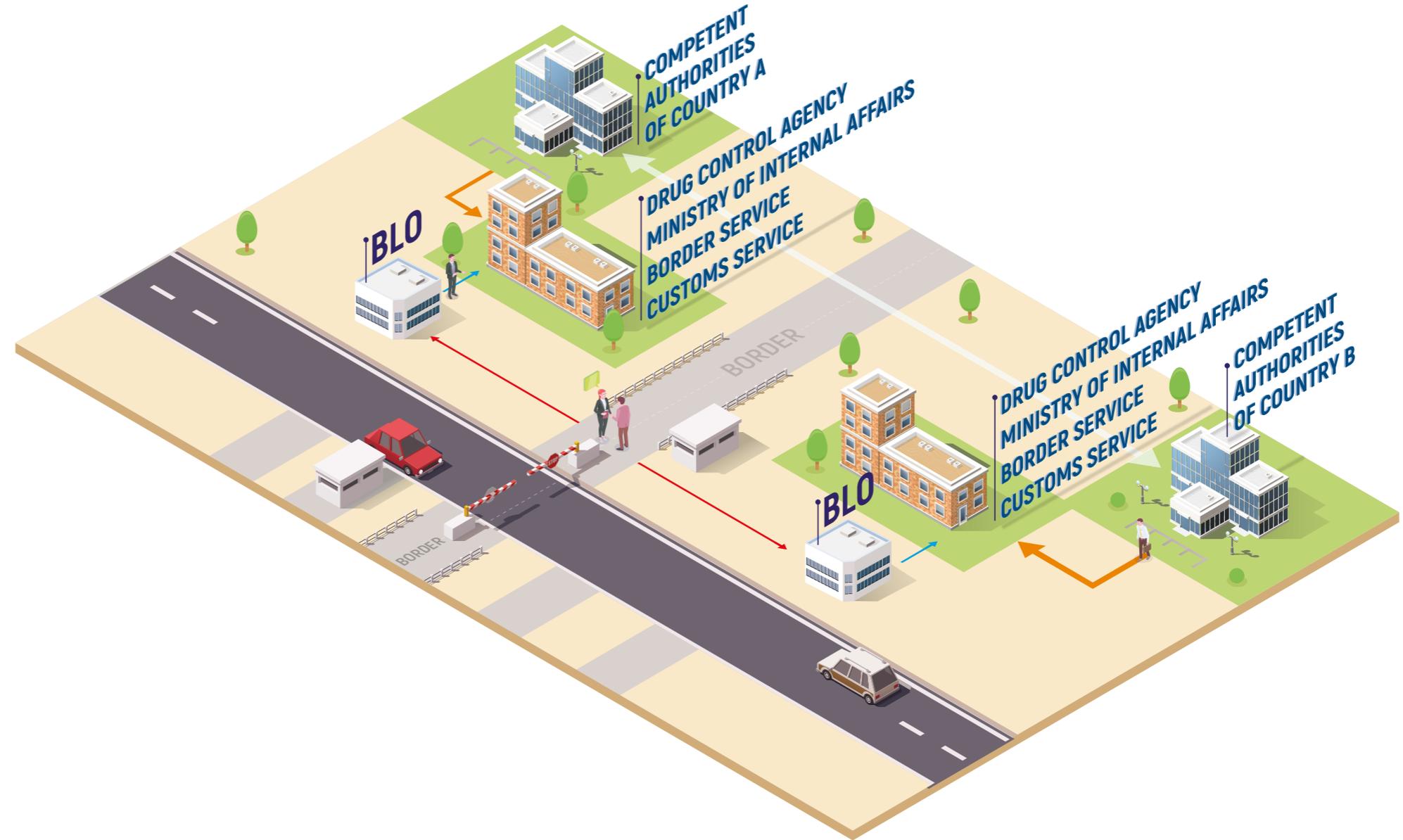


Each of the participating countries has provided both premises and staff for the BLOs. UNODC is contributing to new infrastructure development and capacity-building through the provision of training courses, high-tech equipment and specialized analytical software needed to enhance database analysis and intelligence-sharing, and to establish sustainable information-sharing mechanisms at the regional level. This will enable joint, proactive, and intelligence-driven drug trafficking investigations.



Between 2022 and 2023, BLOs were established at the railway BCP Kayindy on the Kyrgyz-Kazakh border, at the Merke (Syptai Batyr) BCP on the Kazakh-Kyrgyz border, at the Alat BCP on the Uzbek-Turkmen border, at the Ayvaj BCP on the Tajik-Uzbek border and at the Gulbahor BCP on the Uzbek-Tajik border.

- BLO** BORDER LIAISON OFFICE
-  INFORMATION EXCHANGE BETWEEN THE AUTHORITIES
-  CLASSIFIED INFORMATION TRANSMISSION
-  REAL-TIME INFORMATION EXCHANGE BETWEEN BLOs
-  CLASSIFIED INFORMATION TRANSMISSION



IMPLEMENTATION

To ensure effective implementation, a Steering Committee at the regional level and Working Groups in each participating country have been established. Comprised of representatives from five agencies - Border and Customs Services, Drug Control Agency, Ministry of Internal Affairs, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs - these bodies play a critical role in strategic decision-making and streamlining project implementation.

Regional meetings of the Steering Committee are conducted on an annual basis to review and discuss the implementation of the project at the regional level and to draw up recommendations to strengthen further cross-border cooperation and develop a joint action plan for enhancing border controlling capacities in Central Asia.



The project has established institutionalized platforms to hold regular interagency and cross-border training courses at national and regional levels and has standardized information-sharing and reporting mechanisms for interagency and cross-border communication at the selected BCPs.



SPECIALIZED TRAINING COURSES

131 specialized national and regional training courses were conducted since the launch of the project. In total, 2,272 law enforcement officers from the region have undergone various training courses, of whom 524 took part between 2022 and 2024. The courses were in the following areas:

- Methods of data collection, analysis and processing with the use of specialized law enforcement analytical software tools
- Advanced search and inspection techniques for vehicles, cargo and goods
- Risk analysis and profiling techniques of individuals crossing borders

- Verification of the authenticity of travel documents
- Enhancing information sharing and the use of Advanced Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR), biometrics and other data for border security and countering foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs)
- Application of video endoscopes, including EXTECH DV600
- Application of mobile X-ray systems and use of searching kits CT30
- Countering trafficking of drugs, precursor chemicals and new psychoactive substances
- Managing operational activities at BCPs and border areas
- Law enforcement response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Crime intelligence analysis
- Gender and upholding human rights in law enforcement
- Countering cross-border transportation of cash and the identification of cash couriers.



The trainings were delivered with the involvement of international and national trainers and experts, including trainers from the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre for Combating Illicit Trafficking of Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and their Precursors (CARICC), the Turkish International Academy against Drugs and Organized Crime (TADOC) – the structure

within the Turkish National Police established by UNODC, the Central Directorate of Counternarcotics Service of Italy, and international experts from Austria, Germany, Japan, Israel, Latvia, Poland and the United Kingdom. The project conducted several trainings jointly with the Border Management Programme in Central Asia (BOMCA) and Law Enforcement in Central Asia (LEICA) experts.









SUPPORT IN SETTING UP SITUATION AND COORDINATION CENTERS WITHIN LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES IN CENTRAL ASIA

Situation and coordination centers established within law enforcement agencies aim to enhance interagency coordination in monitoring the work of road, railway and air border crossing points; improve the analytical capacity of operational units of law enforcement agencies; and facilitate the centralized collection, processing and analysis of intelligence and cooperation in information exchange based on intergovernmental and interagency agreements in countering narcotics, transnational organized crime, smuggling and the violation of customs regulations.

They are connected to law enforcement agencies' databases to monitor and respond to potential security threats at borders. The real-time data provide invaluable insights, enabling agencies to make quick decisions on conducting security operations and to streamline border management procedures.



The BLO Coordination Center was established within the State Border Service of the Kyrgyz Republic as part of the project's implementation.

The Situation Center was established within the Central Office of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan.



The Border Cooperation Coordination Center was opened within the Border Troops of the State Committee for National Security of the Republic of Tajikistan.

The Operational Management Sector of BLOs, as an operational branch of the BLO Coordination Center of the State Border Service of the Kyrgyz Republic, was opened in Osh, Kyrgyzstan.



Work on the establishment of the Situation Center at the Customs Service under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, started in 2023. The center was provided with cutting-edge equipment.

The Situation Center at the Border Service of the National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan became technically operational in 2023. When officially opened, it will coordinate all the BCPs, BLOs and computer-based training classes along the state border of the country and regulate all processes for data collection, analysis, and exchange.

INTERACTIVE COMPUTER-BASED TRAINING CLASSES

The project assisted Central Asian states with the establishment of interactive computer-based training (CBT) classes within BLOs and law enforcement agencies, with an interactive multimedia training programme that is aligned with the UNODC's overall drug control and crime prevention strategies in the region, adjusted to legal, procedural and cultural aspects of Central Asian countries.



During the COVID-19 pandemic, the CBT classes provided an opportunity for distance learning when travel restrictions limited face-to-face trainings. The CBT classes contributed to the capacity development efforts of UNODC

aimed at supporting national operational capacities on drug law enforcement and maintaining the legal turnover of controlled narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors under the ratified UN conventions.



CBT classes are also used to test the professional expertise of officers. In 2020 - 2023, 487 border officers enhanced their knowledge and skills at the CBT classes.





To date, 14 CBT classes have been established across Central Asia, including six in Turkmenistan, five in Kazakhstan, two in Uzbekistan, and one in Tajikistan.



REGIONAL INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

In 2023, the project developed a concept for the establishment of a Regional Information and Communication System (RICS) with the aim to promptly process the data provided by border law enforcement

authorities online that ensures effective collection, storage, protection, analysis, and exchange of information in combating drug trafficking, as well as interaction between the competent authorities of Central Asian states.

RICS will strengthen the existing BLO communication systems and further enhance regional cooperation in countering transborder organized crime and addressing new challenges and threats.



MOBILE APPLICATION "MY BORDER"

The project supported the launch of the "My Border" mobile application with the Border Service of the National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which is intended for wide use by the public. This mobile application aims to deploy a national mechanism for establishing communication between the Border Service and the general population, by providing useful and easily accessible up-to-date, first-hand information at the BCPs. The mobile application's testing started in 2023. UNODC plans to launch the application in other Central Asian countries starting from 2024.



STUDY VISITS

From 7 to 9 March 2023, the UNODC Regional Project on Enhancing Cross-Border Cooperation by Strengthening the Capacity of Border Liaison Offices in Central Asia in cooperation with the EU-funded Border Management Programme in Central Asia – Phase 10 organized a study visit to the European Border and Coast Guard Agency - FRONTEX (Warsaw, Poland) and the Polish Border Guard for 15 representatives of the border control authorities from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

The study visit aimed to share with Central Asian border agencies best practices applied by FRONTEX in border security with a focus on information flow management, operational management based on data exchange in

real-time, strategic, operational and tactical risk analysis, including assessment of vulnerability, and cooperation between competent agencies.



During the visit, the participants were provided with an overview of the operations of the FRONTEX Situation Center and the Situation Centers of the Polish Border Guard at regional and local levels. Participants

observed implementation of the European Integrated Border Management by being acquainted with the practical "green" border surveillance for tackling the large-scale migration crisis on the border between Poland and Belarus.



In cooperation with the Strategic Affairs Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel, a working study visit was conducted to the State of Israel between 19 and 21 December 2022 for 15 representatives of law enforcement agencies and Ministries of Foreign Affairs from Central Asian countries. During the visit,

participants got acquainted with the best practices of law enforcement agencies utilized by the State of Israel for effective implementation of border control and interagency cooperation, as well as exchanged knowledge and experience on enhancing cross-border cooperation in combatting smuggling and illicit drug trafficking.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE



During project implementation, **equipment valued at over US\$ 5,000,000** was handed over to project beneficiaries. This equipment included passport readers, specialized search and inspection equipment for customs and border control, specialized analytical software, X-ray equipment, drug identification kits, closed-circuit television (CCTV) and surveillance systems, IT equipment, LED monitors, off-road vehicles, and other items.

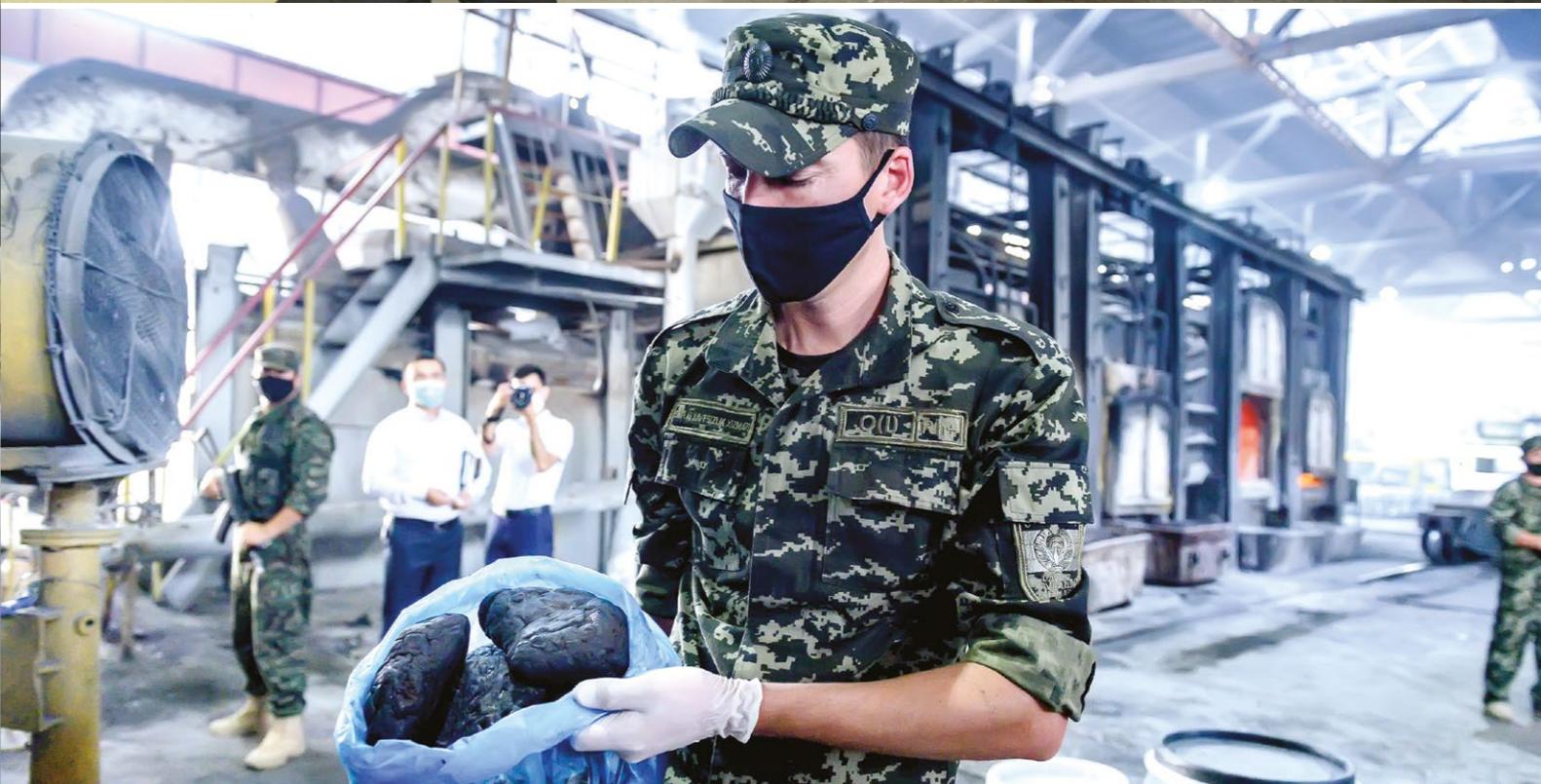
This technical support enhances the capacity of BLOs, interagency coordination on monitoring road, railway and air border crossings, and improves the analytical capacity of the operations units of law enforcement agencies.



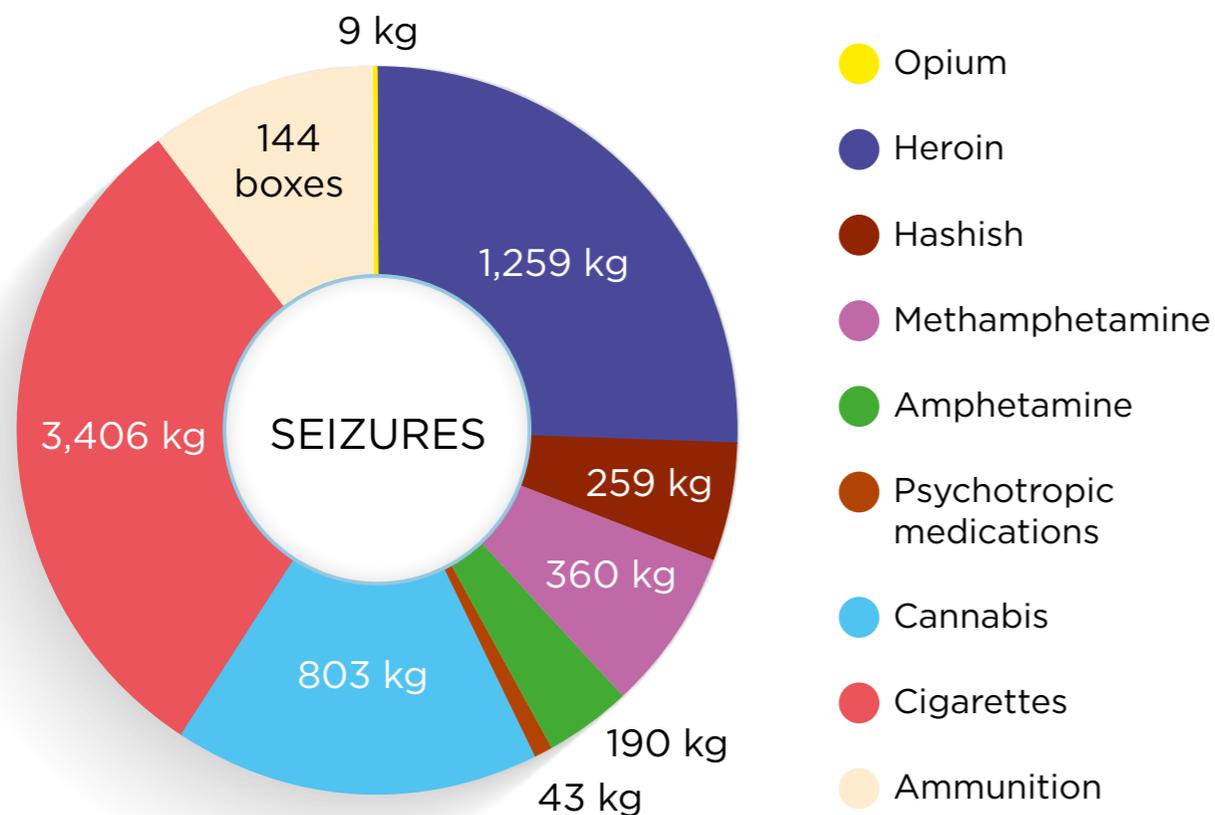


JOINT EFFORTS TO COUNTER SMUGGLING OF NARCOTIC DRUGS AND PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES

During 2022-2024, BLO officers conducted **14 joint operations**, resulting in the dismantling of **six organized crime groups**, and the seizure of **6,321 kg of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances**.



NARCOTIC DRUGS, PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES AND AMMUNITION SEIZED BY BLO OFFICERS IN CENTRAL ASIA IN 2022 – 2024



ADVOCACY, OUTREACH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

AWARENESS-RAISING CAMPAIGNS

Thematic public awareness-raising campaigns play an important role in the fight against illicit drugs. It is crucial to inform people – in particular youth, who make up more than half of the population in Central Asian countries - about the risks posed by drug use and illicit drug trafficking.

In June 2024, the project, in collaboration with the Border Service of the National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan, organized an awareness-raising campaign

at Astana International Airport to mark World Drug Day. As part of the campaign, border control officers stationed at the airport distributed informative leaflets to passengers, highlighting measures against illicit drug trafficking and use. They also provided information about the dangers of drug use, aligning with the World Drug Day 2024 theme “Evidence is clear: invest in prevention.” UNODC informational materials and banners were accessible in the departure and arrival areas of the airport.



UNODC
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FOR PASSENGERS CROSSING THE BORDER

WORLD DRUG DAY | 26 JUNE

Even a single use of a **DRUG** can cause severe harm to the human body. You can become addicted to any type of **DRUG** the first time you try it.

Illegal **DRUGS** are often transported under the guise of ordinary food, medications, or other legal goods.

By agreeing to transport a stranger's luggage across the border, one risks being identified as a **DRUG** trafficker if the luggage is found to contain illicit substances.

It is important to emphasize that **DRUGS** do not equate to medicines. The production, storage, transportation, and public non-medical use of narcotic drugs in public areas incur legal repercussions as dictated by the current laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

It is crucial to **ACKNOWLEDGE** that engaging in such illegal activities can have adverse effects on both the individual involved and the well-being of those in their vicinity. Taking responsibility for one's health and ensuring a secure future starts with each of us.

FOR PASSENGERS CROSSING THE BORDER

DRUGS should not be viewed as a means of financial gain. The production, processing, acquisition, storage, transportation for distribution, shipping, or sale of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, and their analogs carry significant legal consequences in accordance with the current legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

REMEMBER that every gram of an illicit drug represents someone's ruined life. **REFRAIN** from compromising your integrity and ethics for monetary rewards; such actions lead directly to **INCARCERATION**.

Uphold your **INTEGRITY** and prioritize your **WELL-BEING**. Remember that there exist numerous legitimate and honorable avenues to earn a living that benefit society. Always strive to tread the path of righteousness and embrace lawful opportunities that contribute to a positive and fulfilling life for everyone. Choose to remain on the side of **LIGHT** in life's journey.

SAY NO TO DRUGS!

QR CODE

To commemorate World Drug Day 2023, a public outreach campaign was organized to raise awareness of persons crossing the border crossing points on the Kazakh-Kyrgyz and Uzbek-Tajik borders of the ways to combat drug trafficking and to prevent the use of narcotic drugs by children and young people.



During the campaign, the UNODC project team, together with the border and customs services in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and BLO officers working at the Kordai and Ak-Zhol border checkpoints on the Kazakh-Kyrgyz and the Oybek and Fotehobod border checkpoints on the Uzbek-Tajik borders, placed banners

with information on the harm of drugs and preventive measures undertaken by UNODC in cooperation with law enforcement agencies in Central Asia to counter drug trafficking. The project team conducted interviews with border and customs officials working at the border checkpoints and with civilians crossing the border.



To commemorate World Drug Day 2022, the project conducted a campaign to raise public awareness of illicit drug problems.



The awareness-raising campaign was conducted at the Korday BCP on the Kazakh-Kyrgyz border, the Syptatay Batyr BCP on the Kazakh-Kyrgyz border, the Ak-Zhol BCP on the Kyrgyz-Kazakh border, the Zhibek Zholy BCP on the Kazakh-Uzbek border, the Dusti BCP on the Tajik-Uzbek border, the

Sariosiyo BCP on the Uzbek-Tajik border, the Gisht Kuprik BCP on the Uzbek-Kazakh border and also at the Aktau International Airport in Kazakhstan, the International Airport Manas in Kyrgyzstan and Tashkent International Airport in Uzbekistan.



During the campaign, the UNODC project team and law enforcement officers working at the BCPs and international airports placed informational banners and gave out fridge magnets to people crossing the borders. The messages on the banners and magnets were presented in English, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Russian, Tajik, and Uzbek languages.

A campaign video dedicated to World Drug Day was shown at the arrival and departure terminals of international flights of the Aktau International Airport and the border terminal of the Syptay Batyr BCP.



UNODC representatives and law enforcement officers informed citizens crossing land and air borders about World Drug Day, the harmful health consequences of drug use and the legal consequences of illicit drug use and trafficking, among others.





The banners provided the following information: “Even a single use of a drug can cause severe harm to the human body. You can become addicted to any type of drug the first time you try it”; “Illegal drugs are often transported under the guise of ordinary food, medications, or other legal goods”; “Anyone can be found to be a drug trafficker by agreeing to transport a stranger’s luggage across the border if it is found to contain drugs.”

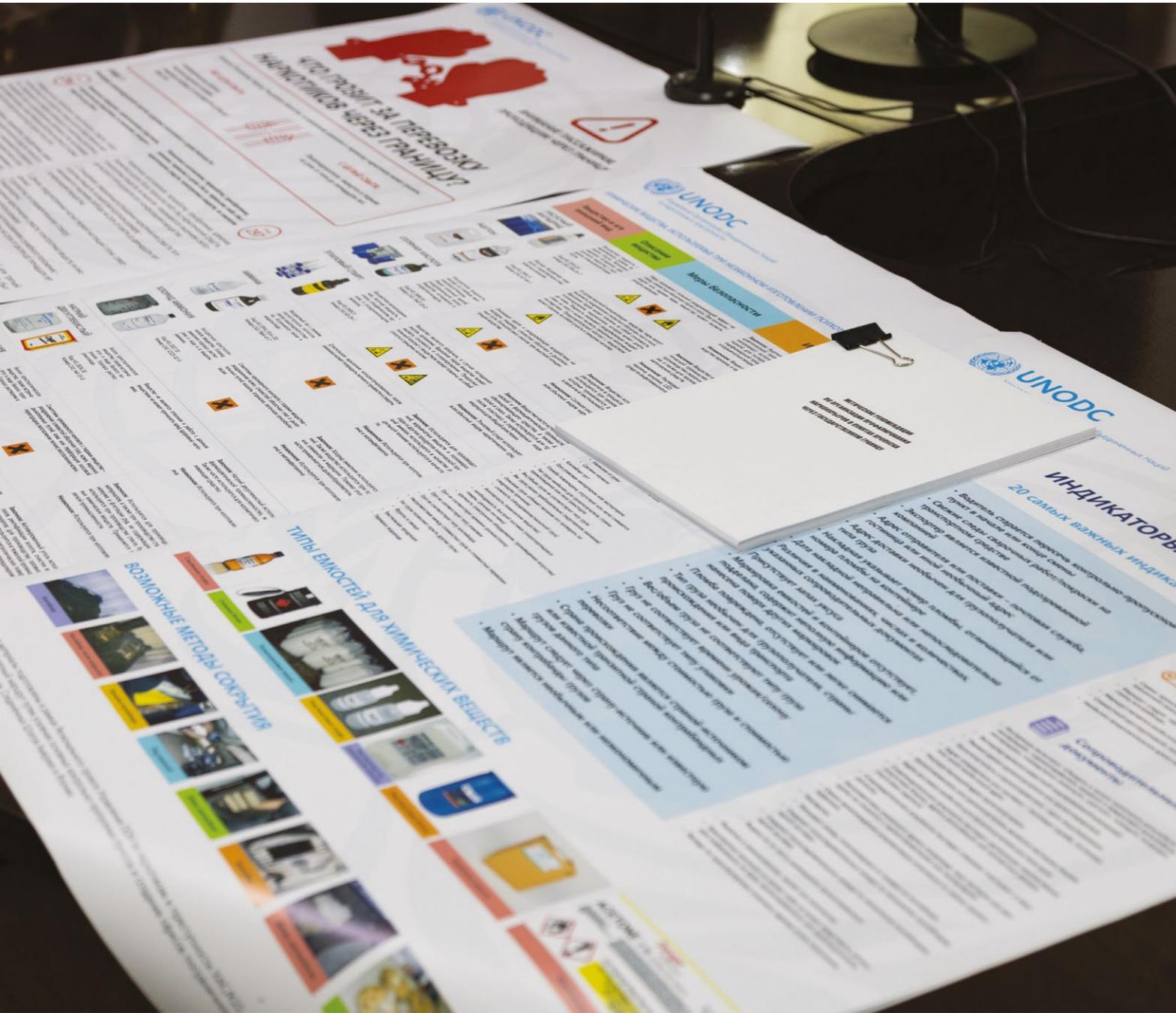


PUBLICATIONS AND INFORMATION MATERIALS

The project developed several publications, including a manual on concealment methods for drugs and psychotropic substances, methodological recommendations on profiling at border crossing points and a guideline on using IBM i2 iBase and i2 Analyst’s Notebook analytical software and a number of awareness-raising materials, including information posters on types of narcotic drugs and precursors, and legal consequences for illicit drug trafficking, sale, storage and abuse, and produced animations that were shown at border crossing points across the region aimed to prevent and suppress offenses at the border by raising awareness of citizens regarding their rights and responsibilities when crossing the border.















МВД. Распознавание номеров автомобилей

Обработка физ. лиц, пересекающих границу

Мониторинг перемещения валюты

Полковник МУХТОДИНОВ ЕСКЕНЕР АЛШЕРОВИЧ







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