

SINGAPORE'S COUNTRY REPORT ON ILLICIT DRUG TRAFFICKING

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Singapore has maintained its status as a relatively drug-free society due to the tough stance it has adopted against drug trafficking and consumption. Despite the Republic's vulnerability to the drug scourge due to its close proximity to the Golden Triangle, tough laws and vigorous enforcement actions have kept the local drug situation under control. But challenges in a complex operating environment are inevitable.

About 3,500 abusers were arrested in 2013. This was an increase of 2% from the number of drug abusers arrested in 2012. Repeat abusers continued to make up majority of total abusers arrested at 69%. Heroin was the most commonly abused drug in Singapore in 2013, accounting for 58% of total drug abusers arrested, while Methamphetamine abusers made up the second largest proportion of drug abusers arrested in 2013 at 34%.

Actions to enhance and adapt Singapore's national strategy against drugs had been taken to deal with the evolving environment and its new challenges. The Ministry of Home Affairs had set up the Task Force on Drugs in Oct 2011 to review the current drug abuse situation as well as study the drug abuse trends and challenges in reducing drug abuse.

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A INTRODUCTION

Singapore has maintained its status as a relatively drug-free society due to the tough stance it has adopted against drug trafficking and consumption. Despite the Republic's vulnerability to the drug scourge due to its close proximity to the Golden Triangle, tough laws and vigorous enforcement have kept the local drug situation under control.

2. Singapore's anti-drug strategy is targeted at reducing both drug supply and demand. To this end, a multi-pronged approach is adopted, comprising tough legislation, vigorous enforcement, intensive preventive drug education and co-ordinated rehabilitation as well as aftercare in its fight against drugs.
3. The drug threat has been contained in Singapore. There are no areas where drugs are openly sold or blatantly abused.

B LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

4. The Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB) is the premier drug enforcement agency in Singapore. CNB's vision is to be a leading and dynamic law enforcement agency in the fight against drugs and to make Singapore drug-free. CNB's strategy against drug trafficking is to detect and arrest all local traffickers before they band together and develop into large-scale and sophisticated players in the drug scene. To this end, CNB officers conduct periodic operations against drug suppliers, street pushers and drug addicts to curb the supply of drugs in Singapore. Stiff penalties are meted out to punish those who disregard the law and to deter others from committing the same offence. In addition, close and strategic collaboration with our foreign counterparts remain critical in CNB's fight against cross-border drug trafficking.

C STATISTICS (ABUSER SITUATION)

Abuse Situation

5. About 3,500 abusers were arrested in 2013. This was an increase of 2% from the number of drug abusers arrested in 2012. Repeat abusers continued to make up majority of total abusers arrested at 69%.
6. Heroin was the most commonly abused drug in Singapore in 2013, accounting for 58% of total drug abusers arrested, while Methamphetamine abusers made up the second largest proportion of drug abusers arrested in 2013 at 34%.

Trafficking Situation

7. The drug traffickers in Singapore generally operate on a small scale with the majority of them trafficking drugs in small amounts. The drug traffickers in Singapore are mostly small bands of people who come together to traffic drugs and their association with each other is often loosely based on friendship or mutual gain. They rely mainly on traditional methods of transactions involving cash and drug exchange between the seller and buyer.
8. Syndicated drug trafficking activities have also been kept in check by rigorous and effective enforcement conducted by CNB. These syndicates are relatively less sophisticated and structured compared to organised drug syndicates or cartels in some countries. Inland, a total of 46 major operations against drug syndicates were conducted in 2013.
9. Illicit drugs are mainly brought into Singapore via the land route. They are usually found hidden on the person, although some of the larger drug seizures had been found hidden in the specially constructed compartments of motor vehicles. International drug syndicates continued to target Singapore as a transit point for their drug consignment due to our excellent connectivity to the region. In this aspect, CNB has been working closely with our regional counterparts to disrupt their syndicated activities. In 2013, CNB conducted 18 joint operations with our foreign partners, four of which were tripartite joint operations.

D ANTI-DRUG STRATEGY / LEGISLATION

Task Force on Drugs

10. Actions to enhance and adapt Singapore's national strategy against drugs had been taken to deal with the evolving environment and its new challenges. The Ministry of Home Affairs had set up the Task Force on Drugs in Oct 2011 to review the current drug abuse situation as well as study the drug abuse trends and challenges in reducing drug abuse. The recommendations were focused on the following key strategies:-

- a. Targeted prevention;
- b. Strong deterrence and enforcement;
- c. Upstream interventions;
- d. Enhanced rehabilitation and supervision; and
- e. Engagement of families and the community.
- f. Enhancing systems and structures

Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA)

11. The Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA) is the main legislation for drug crimes. It provides the legal framework for the control of dangerous or otherwise harmful substances. The Act which came into force in 1973 criminalises the trafficking, manufacturing, importation and exportation, possession and consumption of controlled drugs. It provides for the committal of drug abusers to a Drug Rehabilitation Centre (DRC) for treatment as well as enhances the punishment for those arrested for trafficking in controlled drugs.

Drug Abuse

12. Drug abusers arrested for the first and second times would be sent for treatment and rehabilitation at a DRC. Committal to a DRC does not amount to a criminal record. However, if an abuser is arrested for the third time or more for drug consumption, he/she would be liable for the Long Term Imprisonment or LT Regime. The LT regime was implemented in 1998. It provides for 5 to 7 years and 3 to 6 strokes of the cane for abusers arrested for the third time or more (LT1), and 7 to 13 years and 6 to 12 strokes of the case for abusers who are caught again after serving LT1.

Trafficking

13. The Act was amended in 1975, 1988, 1993 and 1998, to incorporate the death penalty for trafficking in more than 30 grams of morphine and 15 grams of heroin (1975); more than 1.2 kg of opium, 30 grams of cocaine, 500 grams of cannabis, and 200 grams of cannabis resin (1988); more than 1kg of cannabis mixture (1993), and for more than 250 grams of methamphetamine (1998). The MDA also provides for the presumption clause for trafficking. This clause places the onus of proof on the defendant to dispute the charge of possession for the purposes of trafficking for specified amounts of opium, morphine, heroin, cannabis (including cannabis mixture and cannabis resin), cocaine, methamphetamine, ketamine and MDMA ('Ecstasy').

Precursor Control

14. The MDA prohibits the manufacture, distribution and possession of controlled substances useful for producing drugs (precursor chemicals) without proper authorisation. This offence carries a punishment of up to 20 years imprisonment, \$200,000 fine or both. In addition, traders are required under the regulations to maintain records of all transactions involving controlled substances for a period of 2

years. They have to inform CNB concerning the storage of precursor chemicals. It also specifies that all containers of precursor chemicals must be properly marked and labelled. Failure to comply with the regulations may result in punishment of up to 3 years imprisonment, \$10,000 fine or both.

Amendments to the MDA

15. The MDA has been amended to enhance overall deterrence, support enforcement efforts and improve upstream intervention for young abusers. The new legislation will sharpen our regulatory tools and calibrate our legal framework to enable the Government to tackle drug trafficking more effectively. The amendments to death penalty regime came into force on 1 Jan 2013. Other MDA amendments came into effect on 1 May 2013.

16. The key amendments to the MDA were:

- a) Strengthen the punishment framework for repeat drug traffickers and those who traffic drugs to the young and vulnerable, and create a new offence for recruiting them for drug trafficking

Stiffer punishments have been provided for repeat traffickers and those who traffic drugs to young or vulnerable persons. A new offence has also been created with similar punishments for those who recruit young or vulnerable persons to traffic, import or export drugs.

- b) Criminalise organisation of drug gatherings

A new offence has been created to criminalise the arranging or planning of gatherings where controlled drugs will be abused or trafficked. Enhanced punishments are also provided for if young or vulnerable persons are involved in the drug gathering.

- c) Changes to the mandatory death penalty regime for drug trafficking

Changes have also been made to the mandatory death penalty regime as the Courts are now given discretion in the sentencing of drug couriers, subjected to preset conditions. First, the trafficker must have only played the role of courier, and must not have been involved in any other activity related to the supply or distribution of drugs. Second, discretion will only apply if, having satisfied this first requirement, either the trafficker has cooperated with the CNB in a substantive way, or he has a mental disability which substantially impairs his appreciation of the gravity of the act.

- d) Introduce hair analysis to enhance detection and deterrence

Law enforcement officers are now empowered to obtain hair samples of suspected drug addicts for testing of drug use. This new detection tool complements the current framework for urine testing.

e) Introduce temporary listing of new psychoactive substances

New psychoactive substances are being developed rapidly across the globe. Currently, before a substance is made illegal by being listed as a controlled drug under the MDA, careful study is needed. Research is undertaken to better understand its harmful effects. Industry consultation is also necessary to identify possible legitimate uses. This takes time, and in some cases, the substance may be in circulation, causing harm, long before these processes are completed.

In response, a new Fifth Schedule was introduced. This Schedule will allow the authorities to list a new psychoactive substance quickly for a period of 12 months, with a possibility of extension for another 12 months.

CNB officers are given the power to seize new psychoactive substances listed in a Fifth Schedule so that their circulation is restricted. The trafficking, manufacture, import, export, possession or consumption of any substance listed in the Fifth Schedule will not constitute an offence under the MDA, until that substance is removed from the Fifth Schedule and is listed as a controlled drug in the First Schedule whereupon all these offences will apply.

f) Provide for a Community Rehabilitation Centre (CRC)

Young abusers may be transferred to a Community Rehabilitation Centre (CRC) as a step-down arrangement after a short period of detention in the Drug Rehabilitation Centre (DRC). This will allow them to continue with their education or employment during the day, minimize disruption to their daily lives and mitigate the risk of contamination from repeat abusers in the DRC. The CRC will be implemented later this year.

E PREVENTIVE EDUCATION

17. The success of preventive education programmes is pivotal in the fight against drug abuse. In 1994, CNB became the lead agency for Preventive Drug Education (PDE) on a national scale. Since then, our Preventive Education Unit (PEU) has been carrying out a series of anti-drug programmes directed both generally at students and also specifically at high-risk students and youths. CNB works with the National Council Against Drug Abuse (NCADA) to achieve a national consensus of zero tolerance towards drug abuse in Singapore. To supplement and support the annual

Anti-Drug Abuse Campaign led by NCADA, CNB organises a series of activities and programmes to send out preventive drug education messages every year.

18. The focus of CNB's PDE efforts is to reach out to the youths aged below 25 years and centred on helping youths identify drugs, learn their harmfulness and resist temptations to try drugs. As recommended by the Task Force on Drugs, CNB will also adopt a more targeted PDE approach for the at-risk, out-of-school and post-16 youths. CNB's core programmes comprise anti-drug talks, drama skits and exhibitions to reach out to large groups of students and adults. Anti-drug talks are conducted by experienced Narcotics Officers from the PEU in schools, workplaces and public areas to heighten awareness of the dangers of drug abuse and to clarify misconceptions. The talks can then be followed up with exhibitions featuring different types of commonly abused drugs and their negative effects, among other topics.

19. Besides talks and exhibitions, CNB organises a wide range of PDE activities and events throughout the year to engage the youths and stakeholders (e.g. parents, teachers, counsellors). Through these activities, CNB hopes to cultivate life skills and promote healthy lifestyle among participants, so that they will stay clear from drug activities. Some interest-based activities include dance contests (*DanceWorks!*), essay-writing and art competitions, sports carnivals (*Sportzmania*), gaming competitions and parent-kid activities. Recognising that educators and counsellors play an important role in imparting correct moral values and preventing drug abuse in youths, CNB has held seminars and networking sessions for them. During these sessions, CNB shared on issues related to drug abuse among students and possible intervention strategies.

F TREATMENT & REHABILITATION

20. Singapore adopts a compulsory treatment and rehabilitation regime for abusers of all commonly abused drugs including opiates, amphetamine-type stimulants, hallucinogens, central nervous system depressants, cocaine and cannabis. The Director of CNB is empowered under the MDA to commit drug addicts to DRCs administered by the Singapore Prison Service (SPS). Suspected drug abusers are subjected to instant urine tests (IUT) and positive urine samples are sent for verification to the Illicit Drugs and Toxicology Division of the Health Sciences Authority (HSA).

21. For first-time young abusers (aged below 21 years old) who are tested positive by the HSA, CNB will assess their risk level before deciding on the necessary referral actions. The assessment consists of operational assessment by CNB officers and further risk assessment by CNB psychologists for selected cases. For those who are assessed to be of low risk of re-offending, they will be placed under the Enhanced Supervision Scheme (Young Persons) or ESS(YP) for short. The ESS(YP) is a structured rehabilitative programme aimed to help these first-time young abusers in their reintegration into society. Under this programme, the young abusers will be subjected to counselling and casework component delivered by social services

agencies (SSAs), in addition to their urine reporting. This is a more comprehensive approach to help the young abusers deal with the various issues and difficulties that they may encounter; these include psychological problems, inadequate problem solving skills, poor interpersonal relationships, etc. Families of the young abusers will also be engaged, as strong family support is integral to rehabilitation and integration.

22. These young supervisees would report for drug supervision at a dedicated Young Person Reporting Centre (YPRC). The purpose for this segregation is to prevent contamination from the older supervisees who are usually hardcore addicts.

23. For those new young abusers who are assessed to be of moderate risk, they will be referred to a Community Rehabilitation Centre (CRC). CRC is established for new young drug abusers as a step down arrangement after a period of detention in the Drug Rehabilitation Centr. Once transferred to the CRC, these young offenders will participate in a structured residential component. During the structured residential component, these young offenders will be allowed to continue their education or employment in the day and attend compulsory counselling sessions at the centre after work or school.

24. Repeat abusers and those new young abusers who are assessed to have high risk of re-offending will be sent to the DRC for compulsory treatment and rehabilitation. The DRC regime includes an initial detoxification phase and programmes that aim to prepare the drug offender for treatment and change by raising motivation level, modify drug offenders' general thinking patterns about substance use, help the drug offender to identify and learn specific behavioral skills (i.e. assertiveness, managing triggers), and to facilitate drug offenders to develop a highly detailed personal relapse prevention plan. The regime also includes a community based component where drug offenders are released into the community but closely supervised. This component of the regime has a case management aspect where counsellors review and rehearse the skills of their relapse prevention plan.

25. Supervisees with more than two previous drug convictions and are assessed to have a higher risk of re-offending will undergo a more rigorous pre and after-release programme, known as the Enhanced Supervision (ES) Scheme. Under this scheme, the ES supervisees can be subjected to electronic monitoring with curfew requirements and concurrently undergo compulsory counselling during the same period while undergoing the urine reporting at CNB. The intensive interventions are meant to provide close guidance and strong aftercare support to reduce their risks of re-offending and drug relapse.

26. The Singapore Corporation of Rehabilitative Enterprises (SCORE) is a key partner of SPS in inmate rehabilitation. To enhance employability of former drug abusers, SCORE gets them "Ready for Work" by working with SPS to administer the Vocational Training Programme and Work Programme to impart employability skills and positive work ethics while the inmates are detained in the DRCs. Thereafter, SCORE ensures that "Work is Ready" for the former drug abusers when they are

released. SCORE has an Employment Assistance Unit set up to match ex-offenders with employers who are willing to offer them second chances.

G INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

27. CNB recognises that cooperation with its regional and international counterparts goes a long way to stem the flow of such drugs into Singapore. In this regard, CNB cooperates actively with foreign law enforcement agencies on a bilateral basis. Such cooperation can range from the exchange of information and intelligence to joint investigations and operations. Other collaborations with our counterparts include conducting joint-training courses so that officers from participant countries can benefit from the sharing of best practices and experiences. Much of CNB's success in fighting drugs would not have been possible without such bilateral cooperation.

28. CNB works closely with the regional drug law enforcement agencies as well as the US Drug Enforcement Administration and the Australian Federal Police. CNB also maintains liaison contacts with the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL) and the World Customs Organisation's Regional Intelligence Liaison Office (RILO), through its Asia and the Pacific office. In addition, CNB has been a member of the US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA)'s International Drug Enforcement Conference (IDEC) since 2007. CNB also participates in the Asia-Pacific Operational Drug Enforcement Conference (ADEC), the Meeting of ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD) meetings and the ASEAN-China Cooperative Operations in Response to Dangerous Drug (ACCORD) meetings to keep abreast of developments in the regional drug situation and show our commitment to the regional anti-drug fight.

29. Singapore is also a party to all three multilateral Conventions aimed at fighting the drug problem, namely, the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances and the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

H CONCLUSION

31. The contained drug situation in Singapore is a testament to the success of the efforts to implement the total strategy of demand and supply reduction in the Republic. However, the fluidity of the drug situation means that new psychoactive drugs may enter our drug scene and the challenge is to ensure that new drugs of abuse are detected at the earliest possible instance. The transnational nature of drug trafficking activities will also continue to pose a challenge to CNB and drug enforcement agencies in the region.

To deal with these challenges, CNB has enhanced its intelligence, enforcement and drug detection capabilities. Armed with stiff penalties and preventive education programme, CNB will continue to maintain a tough stance against drug traffickers and abusers.

CENTRAL NARCOTICS BUREAU
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