

## Research Article

# Counteraction to Drugs and Plundering as an Element of Strengthening State and Public Security: Administrative and Offender Legal Aspects

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## Abstract

**Background:** This article explores the specific approaches to countering drug trading and plundering, framing them as essential measures for enhancing both national and public security. Drawing on international practices and the current situation in Ukraine, it emphasizes the need for a coordinated and strategic response to these pressing challenges.

**Methods:** To investigate the theoretical and practical aspects of international approaches to legal responsibility in the fight against drug trading and plundering, the article employs a range of scientific methods, including abstract-logical reasoning, analysis, synthesis, historical review, comparison, induction, deduction, generalization and modeling. These methodologies contribute to a comprehensive understanding of how to address these issues effectively in the context of national security.

**Results:** The research highlights that the illicit trade in narcotic substances, psychotropic agents, their analogues and precursors significantly sustains the illegal drug market. Europe remains a primary destination for such substances and Ukraine, due to its geographic location, serves as a key transit country. This positioning along major international trading routes contributes to the inflow and partial retention of illicit drugs within the country, which correlates with increased levels of substance dependency and related offenses.

The Ukrainian government has, therefore, rightly identified counter-narcotics efforts as a national priority. Unlawful importation and transit of opium, heroin, cocaine and synthetic drugs across Ukrainian borders present critical challenges to national safety. In response, Ukrainian authorities are actively engaged in detecting and intercepting unauthorized attempts to move such substances through national territory.

**Conclusion:** Addressing drug trading and plundering requires a comprehensive, multi-faceted strategy. The active involvement of government institutions, law enforcement bodies, civil society organizations and the broader public is essential for meaningful progress. The implementation of effective national programs and legal mechanisms aimed at curbing the illegal distribution of narcotic substances is a vital step toward ensuring public safety and reinforcing the sovereignty of the

state.

Ultimately, the success of counter-trading initiatives, particularly those targeting plundering operations, depends heavily on the alignment of legislative frameworks with contemporary security threats and the practical application of these laws in the judicial system.

**Keywords:** Narcotic drugs (Substances); Public safety; Public order; Plundering; State security; National security; Illegal drug trading

## Introduction

### Addressing drug plundering: A comprehensive approach to safeguard society

The drug plundering presents a significant challenge to public health, national security and economic stability. As a violation of international law, it can result in serious legal consequences for those involved. Beyond its legal implications, drug plundering contributes to the spread of substance dependence, increased criminal activity and social unrest. These outcomes not only affect individuals and communities but also place a considerable burden on the state's resources [1-5].

The economic impact is notable, particularly in terms of lost revenue for legitimate industries such as the pharmaceutical sector. Moreover, governments face increased expenditures related to law enforcement, healthcare for individuals affected by substance use and social rehabilitation efforts.

Despite these challenges, there are effective measures that can be implemented to address drug plundering. Key strategies include:

- Enhancing border security to prevent unauthorized movement of controlled substances.
- Strengthening international cooperation among law enforcement agencies to improve coordination and information exchange.
- Developing comprehensive strategies to address substance dependence, including prevention, treatment and reintegration programs.
- Raising public awareness about the health and societal risks associated with drug misuse, in order to reduce demand and foster informed communities.

The overarching goal of these efforts is to limit the availability and distribution of illicit substances, protect public health and safety and promote the long-term stability and development of society [6-10].

Successfully combating drug plundering requires the collective efforts of governments, law enforcement bodies, civil society organizations and the public. By promoting collaboration and expanding educational initiatives, societies can work toward reducing the harms associated with illicit drug distribution.

It is vital to maintain a proactive and unified approach, ensuring that all sectors of society contribute to creating a safer, healthier future. Public safety and societal well-being are closely tied to our shared commitment to confronting this issue with responsibility, compassion and resolve.

### **Key challenges and strategic responses to drug plundering**

Drug plundering poses numerous risks to public health, security and economic stability. One of the most pressing concerns is the health impact of smuggled substances, which may lead to dependency, psychological and physical health issues and in severe cases, can be life-threatening. The widespread availability of such substances increases the potential for misuse and associated health complications within the population [11-15].

In addition to health-related concerns, drug plundering is often linked to increased criminal activity. The illegal distribution and sale of narcotics can contribute to the emergence of organized groups, incidents of violence and disturbances to public order. Moreover, the financial proceeds from these activities may be used to support other illicit operations, including those that compromise regional and international security.

From an economic standpoint, drug plundering results in substantial losses for governments and legal businesses. As an unregulated and untaxed sector, the illicit drug trade creates a shadow economy that diverts funds away from legitimate industries, such as pharmaceuticals. Additionally, considerable public resources must be allocated to enforcement efforts, the dismantling of illegal operations and treatment and rehabilitation services for individuals affected by substance use.

The social consequences are equally significant. Drug plundering can contribute to the increased prevalence of substance use, diminish overall quality of life and weaken social cohesion. Vulnerable groups, particularly youth, may be at greater risk of becoming involved in unlawful activities associated with the drug trade, which further complicates efforts to maintain societal stability [16-20].

### **A coordinated approach to combat drug plundering**

Addressing this complex issue requires the concerted efforts of national and international stakeholders. Effective responses should include:

- Enhancing legal frameworks to ensure that laws remain aligned with emerging challenges.
- Strengthening border security to prevent the unauthorized movement of controlled substances.
- Fostering international cooperation among law enforcement agencies to share intelligence and conduct joint operations.
- Expanding preventive initiatives focused on education, early intervention and reducing the demand for illicit substances.

Public awareness and community involvement are crucial in building resilience against the spread of drug-related harm. Through comprehensive strategies that integrate legal, health and social responses, societies can make meaningful progress in countering drug plundering and its associated effects [21-24].

### **Materials and Methods**

#### **Methodological framework for the study of countering drug-related offenses and their impact on public and state security**

To explore the theoretical and practical foundations of countering drug-related offenses, including unlawful distribution and misuse, as a means of strengthening both state and public security, this study employed a comprehensive set of scientific research methods. These methods provided the necessary methodological support to ensure a structured and in-depth analysis [25-28].

The following approaches were utilized:

- Abstract: Logical, analysis and synthesis methods helped structure the conceptual framework of the study and facilitated the integration of theoretical and practical insights [29,30].
- Historical and comparative methods enabled the examination of the evolution and current trends in both domestic and international practices related to the prevention of unlawful drug circulation and its broader societal impact.
- Inductive and deductive reasoning played a key role in identifying practical challenges and in formulating strategic directions for improving administrative and criminal policy. Deduction allowed for the

extrapolation of key trends in the development of institutional responses to these issues, while induction helped identify real-world challenges in the implementation of relevant measures.

- The dialectical method was applied to understand counter-drug strategies as dynamic socio-legal phenomena, examining their internal contradictions, changes and development over time.
- The historical-legal method facilitated the analysis of the origins and progression of international efforts to prevent illicit drug activities, contributing to a better understanding of global patterns and best practices.
- The formal-logical and logical-legal methods were instrumental in defining and classifying legal concepts within this field, as well as in developing practical legal recommendations for improving preventive mechanisms.
- The methods of analysis and generalization allowed for the incorporation of international experience into the national context, providing a broader perspective on effective countermeasures.
- The comparative-legal method was used to contrast domestic legislation and enforcement practices with those of other countries, highlighting areas for improvement and adaptation in the national framework.

By employing this diverse methodological toolkit, the study offers a well-rounded perspective on countering drug-related offenses and their associated challenges, emphasizing their implications for public welfare, national security and legal policy. These insights aim to support the development of more effective, evidence-based strategies for reducing the impact of unlawful drug activity and promoting a safer and more stable society [31-35].

## Results and Discussion

### The legal and social dimensions of countering drug-related offenses in Ukraine

The concept of plundering as defined in the criminal code of Ukraine is notably comprehensive, providing an expanded interpretation that encompasses all methods by which such offenses may be committed. Given that narcotic drugs are substances subject to strict state regulation due to their potential harm, their unauthorized use presents a heightened risk to public health. As such, offenses involving these substances, particularly those outlined in Article 305 of the criminal code of Ukraine, transcend the boundaries of economic crime and directly impact the broader framework of societal well-being.

Article 305 of Section XIII of the criminal code specifically addresses the unauthorized acquisition, transportation or distribution of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, their analogues, precursors or counterfeit medications. The Ukrainian legislature classifies such offenses as serious or particularly serious crimes, reflecting their elevated level of threat to public safety and societal order.

The social risks associated with such offenses stem from their potential to introduce harmful substances into the domestic market, where circulation is otherwise strictly regulated or prohibited. A steady rise in the number of individuals using these substances has been observed, accompanied by an increase in associated offenses, many of which are economically motivated. These developments contribute to a broader escalation in criminal activity linked to the illicit drug trade, including transnational and organized criminal operations [36-40].

The emergence of structured criminal networks, cross-border alliances and corruption within public institutions represents a further consequence of these activities. Each of these elements highlights a distinct aspect of the broader threat posed by unauthorized drug circulation. When viewed collectively, they provide a comprehensive understanding of the social impact and risks of this issue.

Illicit drug trading continues to be one of the most pressing challenges confronting Ukrainian society. Current trends indicate a consistent rise in the number of registered individuals affected by substance use disorders. Among the most concerning aspects is the prevalence of drug use among young people, who, due to the transitional nature of their social development and identity formation, are particularly vulnerable.

Scholars such as G. Pishenko and O. Tushchenko, emphasize that youth represent not only the future of the country but also a vital component of its economic and demographic potential. Substance dependence can exclude individuals from both productive employment and family formation, thereby reducing the country's long-term social and economic resilience.

The broader societal consequences of substance dependence include the erosion of cultural and ethical norms, personal and intellectual decline and a reduced capacity for civic engagement. Furthermore, concerns have been raised about intergenerational effects, particularly in cases where prenatal exposure to controlled substances may adversely affect children's health. Studies in the field of genetics have suggested that certain vulnerabilities may be inherited, highlighting the importance of preventive efforts aimed at protecting future generations.

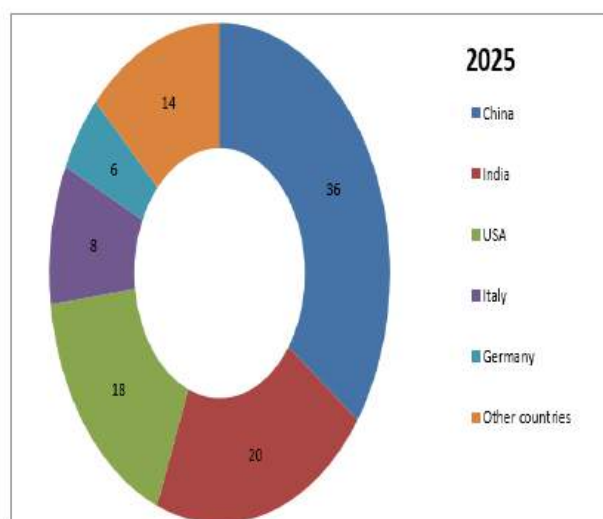
In this context, the protection of public health and the preservation of national demographic integrity become priorities in accordance with Article 16 of the Constitution of Ukraine, which mandates state responsibility for ensuring ecological security and maintaining the nation's genetic heritage.

From a global perspective, according to 2023 data, five countries accounted for over 85% of the worldwide production of internationally regulated psychotropic substances:

- China—36% (363.2 tons)
- India—20% (221.1 tons)
- United States—18% (178.9 tons)

- Italy-8% (91.7 tons)
- Germany-5% (55.2 tons)

All other countries collectively accounted for 13% (139.1 tons). These figures underscore the need for continued international cooperation and regulation to prevent the diversion of such substances into unauthorized channels (Figure 1).



**Figure 1:** Share of psychotropic substances, under international control, in total production volume, gross weight, 2025

### The socioeconomic and legal challenges of unauthorized drug movement in Ukraine

The heightened societal risk posed by unauthorized drug movement lies not only in its health implications but also in the substantial economic harm it inflicts on the state. These activities divert financial resources from legitimate economic sectors and concentrate them in illicit channels controlled by organized networks. It is estimated that, on average, 21 individuals per 10,000 in the population are involved in the unauthorized use of narcotic and psychotropic substances. Particularly concerning is the growing prevalence of such use among younger demographics.

Furthermore, the volume of narcotic substances entering Ukraine through unauthorized channels continues to rise. The structure of the illegal drug market is evolving, with synthetic and semi-synthetic substances such as heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine and ecstasy increasingly displacing traditional substances like cannabis and poppy straw, which have historically been more common in the region. This transformation underscores the escalating complexity of the drug problem within the country.

The issue is further compounded by Ukraine's evolving

role in the international drug trade. Originally positioned as a transit country, Ukraine is increasingly becoming a site of local distribution and consumption. This shift has considerable implications for national security and public health.

The unauthorized movement of narcotics into the country can often facilitate or be associated with other criminal activities. In practical scenarios, individuals involved in such offenses are rarely limited to a single violation. These offenses are frequently accompanied by additional crimes that serve to facilitate or result from the initial act. Many individuals with substance use disorders report difficulties financing their dependency through lawful means, often turning to property-related offenses such as theft, fraud or participation in unregulated markets.

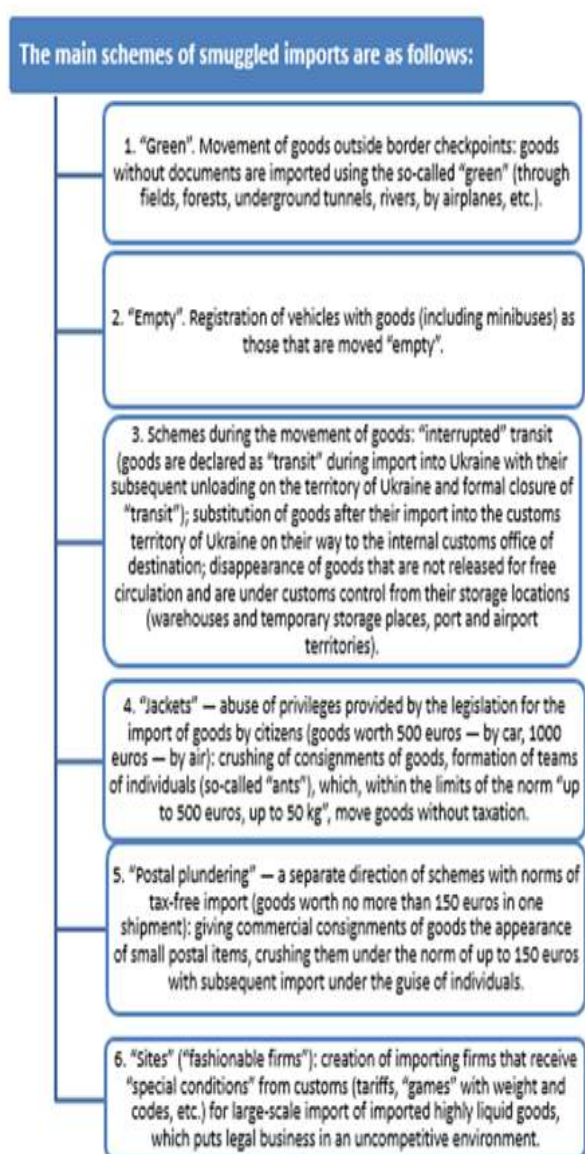
The persistent advancement in the methods used for unauthorized drug transportation reflects both the adaptability and technological sophistication of those involved. These methods are increasingly complex and designed to evade detection by authorities, often leveraging modern technologies and innovative concealment techniques.

From a legal standpoint, the term “unauthorized drug movement” refers to the unlawful import or export of controlled substances across Ukraine's customs border. According to Article 305 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine, this offense is only established when such movement occurs under specific conditions, including bypassing official customs procedures or actively concealing the substances to avoid inspection.

Two primary methods of unauthorized cross-border movement are explicitly described in Ukrainian legislation:

- **Movement outside customs control:** This involves the transportation of goods or substances across the border without passing through designated customs zones, outside permitted hours or through the abuse of official authority to evade inspections.
- **Concealment from customs control:** This method involves the use of specialized compartments, false documentation or the misrepresentation of the nature of the transported goods to avoid detection. It may include disguising the substances as legal products or using documents that are forged or fraudulently obtained.

These practices illustrate the ongoing challenges facing law enforcement and regulatory bodies in Ukraine. Addressing the unauthorized movement and distribution of narcotic substances requires a multifaceted strategy that includes legal reform, enhanced border security, international cooperation and public education (Figure 2).



**Figure 2:** External factors of combating illegal international drug trading

### Operational and legal aspects of preventing the unlawful movement of narcotic substances across borders

Judicial and investigative practice in Ukraine indicates that individuals involved in the unauthorized movement of goods across borders often employ a range of concealment techniques to evade customs control. Analysis of law enforcement efforts reveals that such substances are frequently hidden in specially designed compartments—so-called "concealment locations" which may be adapted for this purpose or situated on the individual, within the body or in personal belongings.

According to applicable legislation, the presence of a concealment mechanism whether specially designed or improvised is not a determining factor in establishing criminal liability. The key element is the act of transporting goods across Ukraine's customs border in a manner that avoids official inspection. Any form of evasion of customs control, regardless of method, satisfies the criteria for the offense as defined in Article 305 of the Criminal Code of

Ukraine [41].

Preventing the unauthorized circulation of narcotic drugs remains a priority of global importance. Central to these efforts in Ukraine are the operational units of the National Police, which conduct a range of preventive and investigative activities. These operations aim to identify, document and disrupt criminal activities related to the illegal trading of narcotic and psychotropic substances or their analogues.

A primary focus of operational and investigative activities is the proactive identification and documentation of individuals and circumstances of interest. This involves collecting and verifying preliminary information related to the behavior of persons or groups potentially engaged in illicit drug-related activity. Through targeted monitoring and analysis, authorities aim to expose and prevent such offenses, thereby supporting broader public health and safety objectives.

Operational actions may include surveillance, collection of intelligence and coordinated interventions to detect and halt the activities of individuals or organized groups involved in drug-related offenses. The integration of these methods contributes to strengthening national drug policy, enhancing border security and promoting social stability.

### Conclusion

At present, Ukraine continues to face significant challenges in addressing the issue of illicit drug trading. This complex situation is shaped by several contributing factors that demand a coordinated and comprehensive response.

First and foremost, the ongoing armed conflict in Ukraine has had a profound impact on national security and law enforcement capacities, including efforts to combat unauthorized drug movement. Secondly, there is a pressing need to enhance legislative measures aimed at improving the overall effectiveness of the response to drug trading. Strengthening legal frameworks plays a critical role in reducing the negative impact of such activities on both the domestic and international economic stability of Ukraine.

Thirdly, it is essential to establish conditions that encourage economic operators to engage in legal cross-border trade. This can be achieved through the development of a transparent and efficient legal environment that facilitates compliance and ensures fair business practices.

Fourthly, improving the professional training and qualifications of customs officers is a key factor in enhancing border security and effectively identifying and preventing unlawful activities. Well-trained personnel are better equipped to respond to modern challenges and to apply advanced methods and technologies in their daily work.

Lastly, a consistent and determined approach is needed to address corruption at all levels. Ensuring integrity and accountability within government and border control institutions is fundamental to the successful implementation

of national anti-trading policies.

Together, these strategic directions form the foundation for a more effective and sustainable response to illicit drug trading in Ukraine, contributing to national security, public health and economic development.

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### Conflict of Interest

Authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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