

UNODC:

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Topic: Measures on the Manufacturing of Opioids
and the Alteration of Fentanyl-Based Medications
in Mexico that Get Transported to the US.

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UNODC



Letter to Delegates:

Dear delegates, it's a pleasure welcoming you to SPIS 2025. My name is Regina Ogaz Murúa Beltrán and I will introduce myself to you as your director for this SPISMUN 2025 UNODC committee. My fellow partner and your moderator is Camila Marian López Garza who is also really pleased to guide you through this unforgettable experience. Together, we look up to working as a team so you can feel comfortable in this committee.

As delegates, you will have the opportunity to debate possible solutions for worldwide challenges. Nevertheless, in this committee, your attention will be placed on drug and crime issues. This topic may not be the easiest, however, as your chair, we expect you to perform your best and be an active participant on the 2 days of this MUN. I hope this experience shapes you not only as a Model U but as a person.

It is crucial you aren't afraid of expressing your thoughts and work with the rest of the delegates to solve challenging problems. We are here in case of any doubts which you can ask throughout the MUN or via gmail. I invite you, with the help of your fellow delegates, to make this committee the crème de la crème so this event can be remembered not as a competition, but as a fun and enjoyable experience. Good luck delegates!



History of the Committee:

UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime), has been present for almost two decades, the sole purpose is to ensure the world is a safer place for all people. It specifically sought to create a world where there are no drugs, organized crime, corruption, or terrorism. The United Nations, when founding this committee, had as a projection to seek to have health, security, and justice on the planet, promoting peace and welfare to all people. This assembly offers assistance at the international level, committing to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is an action plan that supports people, the planet, and prosperity. To obtain peace and access to justice worldwide. It has 17 goals and 169 targets covering economic, social, and environmental issues with partnerships focused on the needs of people living in the least favorable conditions (poverty and vulnerability). UNODC's interagency partners are the World Health Organization, the International Narcotics Control Board, the Universal Postal Union, the World Customs Organization, and the International Civil Aviation Organization. To make what they aim to become a reality they build a criminal justice system reinforcing human rights and addressing international organized crime threats, all while implementing the United Nations Convention against Organized Crime. It's their responsibility as a committee to support Member States against the world drug problem by implementing international drug control treaties and medical substance prevention strategies. In addition to that, UNODC helps illicit drug farmers and reports drug trafficking data. They implement drug control and crime avoidance programs shaped to the needs of the country, making every country's programs and solutions unique and tailored to be more suitable and convenient for a superior result. To achieve the goal and make it all happen, UNODC has implemented 19 legal instruments against terrorism, which address corruption and its negative impact on society by supporting the development of national anti-corruption legislation and criminalizing 11 different corruption offenses. Likewise, this committee and its member states are committed to supporting the implementation of the 2030 agenda which recognizes the rule of law and effective and humane justice systems. They also communicate through advertising and other methods, as well as providing answers to the most frequently asked health-related questions about drug use. A global report on drugs around the world published in 2023 by UNODC states that the organization has achieved record program delivery in several areas; border management, alternative development, anti-corruption, combating wildlife and forest crime, terrorism prevention, and money laundering. This resulted in UNODC achieving an overall implementation rate of 102.7, which also marked the committee as having the highest expenditure.



History of the Topic:

Fentanyl was developed in 1959, nevertheless, this dilemma and the obstacles it leads to have been a rising problem since 2012. Overseeing the now real issue, the United Nations set it under international control in 1964. Fentanyl is sought after by the DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) which also created the Controlled Substances Act, or “Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention Control Act of 1970”. This drug acts as a painkiller and anesthetic and can be lethal. Creating a problem of great intensity, the number of deaths due to drug overdose increases year after year. Also, the TCO members have been changing the analgesic, making a new, more addictive, and deadlier version of it, known as the “rainbow fentanyl”.

Mexico plays a huge role in the trafficking of fentanyl-based opioids, and fentanyl itself, to the USA because of its border closeness and Mexican TCO’s strategic planning.

Because of the crisis in the United States of America, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has paid close attention to drug trafficking from the United Mexican States. Besides the efforts of the USA in controlling the borders, stopping the TCOs, and managing fentanyl production, the country of Mexico has imposed some challenges. Some of those adversities were that the Mexican government denied the making of fentanyl in the United Mexican States, which has been proved wrong, and they have also limited access to naloxone, a medicine that helps reverse overdoses. They stated that the People’s Republic of China was the principal character in fentanyl flow to the United States trying to break free of the hassle.



Introduction of the Topic:

Fentanyl caused the worst drug crisis ever in the United States, sadly causing the death of more than 1,500 Americans every week from overdoses on abuse of this drug. In 2023, 107,500 people died because of this drug, and every year since 2016, unfortunately, the number of people passing away because of the excess consumption of fentanyl has tripled. In Mexico, the Sinaloa Cartel and the Jalisco New Generation Cartel have become the leaders in the main production of this narcotic, which is usually mixed with other drugs, and the consumer is not informed of this, and then it is compressed into pills to be able to get it across the border. Today, it is common to hire Americans to get this drug across the border, either by vehicle or by foot. New scanning technologies are currently being developed to prevent this, and law enforcement actions are being taken, as well as strengthening border controls at legal ports. Some actions that should be taken by both sides would be to close pharmacies that sell fentanyl-laced drugs, dismantle trafficking networks, take more effective Mexican enforcement actions, identify border inspections, reduce Mexico's cooperation, and expand and improve U.S. measures.



Key Players:

Mexico:

The Sinaloa Cartel and the Jalisco New Generation Cartel are the two main groups producing and supplying fentanyl in Mexico to the United States, with large production and distribution facilities.

China and India produce fentanyl, often in clandestine facilities located in different parts of the country. Although there are cooperative efforts between the United States and Mexico, current Mexican policy aims to limit cartel activity, combat human trafficking, and reduce production.

China:

China was the shipping hub for fentanyl smuggling to the direct source of the United States until 2019, but then the country introduced tougher legal restrictions to stop the trade. However, Chinese companies remain the source of precursors that go directly to the source of the Mexican cartels. It is difficult to monitor precursor traders in terms of legal activity, as throughout the supply chain, uncontrolled parties leave room to acquire chemicals from the Mexican cartels. The trade relationship with Mexico, as well as the lack of essential cooperation between the United States and China in terms of precursor regulation, both ensure and slow down the flow.

India:

Consequent to Chinese restrictions, India has emerged as an alternative source of chemical precursors for fentanyl. Pharmaceutical and chemical companies in India produce substances, legally at first but eventually diverted for illicit production in Mexico. India has entered a tipping point in the global precursor supply chain, being the reason for the lack of regulation on the growth of the chemical industry. Despite being aware of this situation, much regulation is needed to limit the supply and existence of fentanyl precursors in Mexico.

United States:

The largest market for fentanyl-based pharmaceuticals is the United States, with a serious public health crisis and an increasing number of overdose deaths. Fentanyl and other derivatives are trafficked by routes that cross the U.S.-Mexico border, and because of the distribution routes, they remain accessible to all S. states. U.S. authorities have also lobbied other countries to complicate regulations and international cooperation on the precursor material, hoping to reduce the amount of the drugs flowing north to Mexico, while proposing that foreign companies participate in the traffic through possible sanctions. The United States has seen increased monitoring at the southern border, especially at entry checkpoints.

Canada:

Canada is a secondary market source and at the same time a transit country for fentanyl and its precursors. Some of the illicit substances are sent directly to Canada from Asia, while others are delivered from the United States across the same border. Increased consumption and distribution in Canada constitute a serious risk for the country and the federation has cooperated more thoroughly with the United States in the detection and control of opioids at the entrances to the country. In addition, Canadian authorities have attempted to increase information sharing with the United States and other countries as illegal use and trade remain a public health issue.

UN Actions:

UNODC has spent a lot of time and put thorough effort into acting against the Manufacturing of Opioids and the Alteration of Fentanyl-Based Medications in Mexico that get Transported to the US. For example, in 2015, UNODC started the project “Global SMART” which focused on the improvement of monitoring drug trafficking. This is supported by the approximate \$2 million budget allocated to enhance law enforcement capacity and intelligence sharing annually. Also, UNODC launched a “#NoMoreOpioids” Campaign, in 2021, aiming to raise awareness about the consequences and dangers of opioids and synthetic drug trafficking. This campaign was made of outreach activities and educational material for over 500,000 people in the Mexican states.

A major initiative UNODC applied in 2019 was establishing an intelligence-sharing network that connected over 30 agencies in the nation and North America, this resulted in the dismantling of over 15 crucial operations of drug trafficking connected to synthetic opioids.

SDG’s 2018 action plan included implementing community-based programs, capacity development workshops, and initiatives related to data collection and analysis addressing the topic in various ways. This includes the project aimed at enhancing the regulation of the framework around base chemicals with a funding of \$500,000. Recent 2020 research reports were published for the analysis of opioid trafficking routes which has influenced Mexican legislative laws. Between 2015 and 2022 the seizure of illicit fentanyl shipments intercepted into the U.S. from Mexico decreased by 30%. This demonstrated the success done by UNODC’s various initiatives regarding this issue.

Current Status:

The United States has been greatly affected by the Mexican drug cartels responsible for the major trafficking of Opioids and the Alteration of Fentanyl-Based Medications in Mexico that get Transported into the country. The number of poisoning deaths caused by synthetic opioids increased largely from 2011, with 2,666 deaths, to 2022, with 74,225 deaths. Nevertheless, recent actions have been successful, with a decrease in 2023 to 59,019 deaths. Despite this improvement, the crisis remains alive and unpredictable, with the availability of fentanyl and broader issues like addiction and mental health. Seeking to understand the ongoing issue, investigations on the root causes of addiction were made which provided an important insight on the next steps to create prevention strategies and combat this situation. The Addiction Group stated that nearly 27.2 million Americans experienced drug use abuse (DUD) and 70.3 million (ages 12+) used illicit drugs in the past year. In response to combat these statistics, various initiatives have been developed; access to support services, education on the subject of addiction, and community-based prevention programs. These efforts aim to improve the current problem and reduce future negative consequences.

In this problem, the two main countries that play a crucial role and are affected the most are the United States and Mexico. However, this issue has a global impact that affects other nations in multiple ways. This crisis is spreading in emerging markets throughout Latin America with rising deaths from opioid use. To battle the future effects this situation might evolve into, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) are working together to form new strategies concerning the related countries. If this continues to spread or worsen then consequences will surge; there would be increased overdose deaths, an expanded illicit drug market, a public health crisis, international relations burdens, and economic strains.



Guiding Questions:

1. What aspects favor the trafficking and production of opioids and fentanyl?
2. Which group produces the most opioids and fentanyl?
3. How does drug trafficking affect the relationship between the two countries?
4. What plans or actions do the UN and UNODC have to reduce this problem?
5. How do these substances affect the population?
6. What difficulties do Mexico and the United States face in stopping the production of these drugs?
7. How will the new administrations of both countries (Donald Trump and Claudia Sheinbaum) address this problem?



Quorum:

1. Mexico
2. United States
3. Canada
4. Argentina
5. Brazil
6. Francia
7. España
8. Alemania
9. Colombia
10. India
11. China
12. Italia
13. Egypt
14. Montenegro
15. United Kingdom
16. Morocco
17. Portugal
18. Croatia
19. Ghana
20. Nigeria



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