

Peace, illicit drugs and the SDGs

A development gap



UK Research
and Innovation

Authors:

This Policy Brief was compiled by Eric Gutierrez and Karol Balfe of Christian Aid, and freelance copyeditor Andrew Jacques.

Acknowledgements:

Special thanks to Jonathan Goodhand, Patrick Meehan and Jasmine Bhatia of SOAS University of London, and Celia Davila and Thomas Mortensen of Christian Aid Colombia for their expert advice. Thanks also to Mark Shaw, Ross Eventon, Alison Doig, Kate Newman, Laura Taylor, Fran Witt, Theo Gott, Kim Kemp, Leila Morris and Chine McDonald.

Christian Aid exists to create a world where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty.

Poverty is an outrage against humanity. It robs people of their dignity and lets injustice thrive. But together we have the power to transform lives.

We are a global movement of people, churches and local organisations who passionately champion dignity, equality and justice in 37 countries worldwide. We are the changemakers, the peacemakers, the mighty of heart.

We provide urgent, practical help in times of crisis and beyond. We seek to eradicate extreme poverty by tackling its root causes. Together with people living in poverty, we amplify our voices to speak truth to power and create lasting change.

Everyone is equal in the sight of God. For over 70 years this has inspired us to stand together in solidarity with our global neighbours, of all faiths and none.

christianaid.org.uk

Contact us

Christian Aid
35 Lower Marsh
Waterloo
London
SE1 7RL
T: +44 (0) 20 7620 4444
E: info@christian-aid.org
W: christianaid.org.uk

Contents

Foreword	5
Executive summary	7
The SDGs and the people left behind	13
The need to see drugs as a development issue	21
The consequences of the drugs and development blind spot	24
Flawed efforts to bring drugs policy and development together	26
Illicit drug crop economies as sources of order and disorder	27
The need to see illicit drugs economies as a peacebuilding issue	29
Recommendations and policy implications	33

Cover: The child of an Afghan farmer harvesting opium sap from a poppy field in eastern Afghanistan May 5 2015. Photo courtesy of Noorullah Shirzada/AFP/Getty Images

Foreword

Arnobi Zapata and Andres Gil

Vice-president of National Association of Peasant Reserve Areas (ANZORC: Asociación Nacional de Zonas de Reserva Campesina) and the National Spokesperson of COCCAM (a platform of peasant organisations); and President of ANZORC.

For us Colombians, our conflict has been brutal and deadly, with over eight million victims. Our communities have been terrorised, particularly the most marginalised, with violence and displacement. Rural poverty and general inequality has created a breeding ground for all armed groups, guerrillas and paramilitaries.

War economies have defined our lives. Colombia has by far the highest number of hectares of coca leaves in the world, showing how costly eradication programmes haven't worked. Exclusion created a need for those of us on the margins to find ways to cope and survive. For many of us displaced peasant farmers, our only option for survival was relying on illicit crop economies.

A new hope for a different future emerged with the signing of the Final Peace Agreement on 24 November 2016, following over 50 years of internal armed conflict. This wide ranging Peace Agreement covers six interconnected and interdependent areas. The promise of this new future is so crucial to us as it includes full rural agrarian reform; political participation; reincorporation of guerrillas and the dismantling of criminal organisations and finding solutions to the illicit economy.

Both ANZORC and COCCAM were born as movements in response to discussions amongst Colombian peasant farmer organisations. Collectively we are made up of more than one million Colombians who inhabit approximately six million hectares and representing 62 organisations and social movements. Our mission is to contribute to peace in Colombia and to guarantee the human rights of peasant farmers and the delivery of integrated rural reform (point 1 of the Peace Agreement).

We are part of the historical struggle of the Colombian peasantry for access and the right to land and territory. We are seeking the recognition of the rights of peasant farmers and our right to territory and land, for us expressed in Peasant Reserve Zones - a specified area

Christian Aid is a partner in the Drugs and (Dis)order Research Project and funded by the UK's Global Challenges Research Fund, playing a role in engaging development and peacebuilding actors globally and in Colombia, in our practical engagement in trying to support local communities in transforming war economies into peace economies in Colombia, in facilitating links between the academics and other key actors, foremost, local activists from COCCAM and ANZORC, but also the broader development sector, and the specific focus on peacebuilding and conflict transformation that we bring.

of land that is not only a refuge but also designated for the peasant economy.

Our communities know what it takes to survive. We are integral to the solution of transforming from war to peace economies. As farmers, at the frontline of the illicit economy, the problem of coca, marijuana and poppy crops in the country cannot be addressed without engaging us. At the heart of this is the implementation of Point 4 of the Peace Agreement (on dealing with illicit drugs), which is expected to see thousands of families engage in voluntary, comprehensive and concerted substitution. We want to play an active role in this transformation and building peace and delivering social justice in Colombia.

However, today in Colombia, we face the great challenge of defending the commitments made in the Peace Agreement, which are at risk of being abandoned. We want our right to land, to health and work. Facing ongoing persecution of our leaders, we continue to mobilise and defend our livelihood and our cultural identity. We are committed to political and non-violent responses to our historical problems. The Peace Agreement cannot remain an aspiration, it must be implemented. If implemented, it would bring real and meaningful change.

Solutions to transforming war to peace economies have to include people in marginalised territories in Colombia, and these solutions should be built by those that understand the problem best.

Arnobis Zapata *[Signature]*



New board of directors of ANZORC, December 2018

Executive summary

A failure in counter-narcotic policy

Trillions of dollars have been spent attempting to tackle illicit drug economies, but the problem continues to grow.¹ Globally, opium production has doubled since the turn of the century. According to the latest estimates, the global value of the illicit drug market could be between US\$300 and US\$600 billion a year.² In Afghanistan, Colombia and Myanmar, illicit drug cultivation has continued to grow even after the signing of ceasefires and peace agreements.³

By any measure, this is a failure of counter-narcotic policy. Law enforcement (including policies associated with the “war on drugs”) rather than development and peacebuilding are at the leading edge of efforts to combat drug economies in fragile, borderland regions.

This paper supports the case that the two strategic pillars of the “war on drugs” – the eradication of illicit crops and the militarisation of the fight against drug gangs – have both been a disaster. Globally, the fragile consensus surrounding the “war on drugs” is falling apart.⁴

There are increasing efforts to establish counter-narcotic strategies that prioritise pro-poor development, align anti-drugs policy with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and move away from the militarised approach inherent in the “war on drugs”.

While these initiatives are welcome, to date, the evidence base to support such policy reform remains weak. It is unclear how these seemingly opposed policy fields – drugs and development – can be reconciled in practice.

The people left behind

The SDGs provide a unique mandate for creating a better future for us all. Importantly, peacebuilding (SDG 16) is recognised as central to ending poverty and hunger. The ambitions of this global policy framework to ‘reach the last first’ and ‘leave no one behind’ are admirable.

Yet the SDGs are barely touching the places where peacebuilding challenges are most urgent: the margins (both geographical and economic) and the borderlands where violence, fragility and displacement are rife. Millions of people in these regions live in poverty, lack access to the bare essentials and, in certain countries,

are struggling to build peace after decades of war. These marginal spaces are frequently zones of extreme and chronic poverty. Here, livelihoods depend upon the informal, illicit or criminal economies; the imprint of the state is weak or fitful. These regions seem to be largely immune to development successes celebrated at the national and international levels.

SDG 16 and other related goals, targets and indicators do not currently consider illicit drug economies to be an explicitly relevant factor in peacebuilding. This failure to understand the wider role of drug economies has real-life consequences for ordinary people - in different ways for men and women. It also misses development and peacebuilding opportunities.

The complex development challenge posed by illicit crop economies

By their nature, Illicit economies are criminalised, hidden and marginalised. They frequently expose communities on the margins to high levels of violence, dispossession and exploitation.

And yet in certain contexts and conditions, illicit drug economies can also provide these same communities with an income, employment and protection amid violence, insecurity and poverty. Illicit economies can be a coping and survival mechanism for those excluded from markets and unable to obtain state protection.⁵

The denial of economic, social and cultural rights is frequently both a driver and an outcome of state fragility, armed conflict and illicit economies. The continuing militarisation of the “war on drugs” has translated into a sustained and often devastating attack on human rights: from the use of the death penalty in 33 jurisdictions globally⁶ to the killings of human rights defenders in Colombia, who promote voluntary crop substitution and more humane public policies on illicit crops.⁷

Peace processes typically aim to reduce the number of fighters and weapons, but tend to overlook, or fail to address, the impacts of illicit economies on long-term stability and development.

Addressing a blind spot

The SDGs provide an opportunity to develop new, contextually attuned approaches to counter-narcotics and peacebuilding efforts – based on solid research and applying a gender lens.

States need to recognise the true impact of illicit economies and their role in development and peacebuilding when addressing the SDGs. This would encourage a radical shift away from the counter-productive policies that have historically defined their relationship to illicit drug economies.

There is a lack of data on the scale, depth and impact of illicit drugs crop economies. The issue is viewed largely in terms of law enforcement and there is an over-reliance on aggregated statistics collected by national governments. The nation-state clearly has a key role to play in people's lives, from social protection to peacebuilding to economic development. But the SDGs' reliance on the state as the primary unit of analysis leads to an underplaying of the sub-national and cross-border dimensions of conflict, fragility and illicit economies. As a result, the data collected is often on the wrong issues, based on limited data sets, or too dependent on government-generated data.

The need for a new approach

Drugs and development policies must complement each other to address the fundamental problems underpinning conflict and poverty in many parts of the world: the marginalisation and exclusion of these borderland territories and communities. We need a clearer, more rounded picture of how illicit economies really work, and the distribution of costs and benefits in developmental terms. We could then more fruitfully explore the ways in which drugs policy and development policy could be brought together in a complementary way to tackle these issues and accelerate our progress towards the SDGs.

This paper is part of a major four-year consortium of global research networks and institutions that has been set up by the Drugs and (Dis)order Research Project and funded by the UK's Global Challenges Research Fund. This research project is developing and testing approaches to integrate policies on drugs, development, peacebuilding and security based on longitudinal research in the borderlands of Afghanistan, Myanmar and Colombia. Here, addressing illicit drug crops continues to be fundamental to the transformation of war to peace economies.

Recommendations

A new approach to transforming illicit drug crop economies is needed in order to support sustainable transitions that achieve the targets and ambition of the SDGs. Analysis and policy coherence are required to ensure that drugs and development policies are not working at cross purposes. We offer the following recommendations to better align peacebuilding, the tackling of illicit drug crop economies, and SDG 16.

Address the blind spot in SDG 16 and engage systemically with the interaction between drug economies and development. States need to ensure that the indicators and monitoring mechanisms for SDG 16 recognise and address the complex interactions between drug economies, development and peacebuilding. Reaching marginalised communities in borderlands requires an approach that goes beyond a state-centric model to look at how men and women in local communities mitigate risks through illicit activities; how they access credit despite the absence of formal credit providers; how they find informal income sources; and what relationships they form and deals they strike to obtain protection.

Recognise illicit drug crop economies as a human rights issue. States should carefully consider human rights obligations when seeking to transition from war to peace economies. Routinely stigmatised and criminalised, communities surviving on illicit economic activities are typically denied their human rights, particularly access to justice and economic, social and cultural rights. The voices representing these communities must be heard and their human rights respected, protected and fulfilled. SDG monitoring should provide communities with alternative development opportunities, before embarking on eradication campaigns that wantonly destroy livelihoods and, in the worst cases, kill and maim.

Abandon the approaches of the “war on drugs” and change the measure of success. Governments, regional and international bodies and institutions should abandon the counter-productive and damaging policies that have historically defined their relationship to illicit drug economies. The widespread criminalisation of the informal economy is not effective. The SDGs are an opportunity to encourage a new, contextualised

approach: one that commits governments to build counter-narcotics and peacebuilding initiatives on a sound foundation of research and understanding. If the aim of counter-narcotics policy is to reduce people's reliance on illicit crops and create peaceful transitions from armed conflict, the criteria of success should not be metrics like "reduction in hectares cultivated" or "kilograms of drugs seized". They should be measures of economic development, access to public services, poverty reduction, respect for human rights, levels of human security, confidence in the state, and access to meaningful employment.

Acknowledge trade-offs and mitigate harm. Particular counter-narcotics policies risk endangering peace as well as having long-term consequences for development goals. Policies and approaches to addressing illicit drug crop economies need to assess any risks or unintended consequences. Peace processes need a more rigorous analysis of how interventions are likely to impact on existing power dynamics and elite behaviour.

Ensure illicit drugs are addressed in peace processes. States should apply nuanced strategies when dealing with transitions from war to peace economies. These have the best chance of improving prospects for peace. Crop eradication policies are deeply unpopular and potentially destabilising. Formal peace agreements that take into account existing political settlements – and how they are shaped by illicit economies – are more likely to succeed. Despite the violence and coercion, under certain conditions, illicit economies may fill gaps in building peace and reconstructing livelihoods. Rather than seeing illicit economies as problems to be solved by law enforcement operations, peace agreements are more likely to build sustainable peace if they adopt nuanced "do no harm" strategies and provide people with secure land tenure, access to public services, and alternative economic opportunities to address the factors that attract poor subsistence farmers to illicit activities in the first place. Finally, securitised/militarised responses should not be the core of counter-narcotics or peacebuilding initiatives, but should complement locally sensitive development programmes.

Focus on the margins in borderland areas and listen to women and the real experts. Economically and geographically marginal regions should become central

to any war-to-peace transition, with governments ensuring their political settlements are inclusive and bridge the conflicting priorities and interests of the centre and peripheries. States should then invest in further research and understanding of the perspectives of those living in the borderlands, and build (and fund) programmes that relate to this. Women often step into larger roles in the aftermath of conflict^a – making more decisions on everything from crop choice to use of credit, and having a growing influence in forgiving enemies and rebuilding community ties. Regardless of the context and situation, women's insights and experiences need to be systematically documented by donors and other development actors to inform the design of development programmes. The communities involved in illicit drug economies are the real experts on resilience and survival. Policy-makers should learn from them and apply those lessons as they design their programmes.

The SDGs and the people left behind

At a time of political fragmentation, splintering global cooperation and rising nationalism, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a unique mandate for creating a better future for us all. Importantly, they include peacebuilding, and consider it critical to ending poverty and hunger. SDG 16, for example, aims to create peaceful, just and inclusive societies.¹⁰

But as things stand, the SDGs are barely touching the places where peacebuilding challenges are most urgent – the margins and the borderlands where violence, fragility and displacement are rife.¹¹ Across the world, millions of people in these regions live in poverty. They lack access to the bare essentials and are, in certain countries, struggling to build peace after decades of war. They are often forced to find unorthodox ways to survive. Many create their own social and political order. They are undoubtedly among the ‘furthest behind’ – those the SDGs have committed to ‘reach first’.

And yet, because they typically live in areas with a weak or contested state presence and where data is limited, the SDG monitoring system will not measure whether they are achieving the goals or being left further behind.

Often they turn to illicit drug economies. Under certain conditions, these economies can provide them with an income, employment and protection amid violence, insecurity and poverty.

But illicit economies are by their nature criminal, unregulated and exploitative. So communities on the margins often have no choice but to live under the control of criminal networks in order to survive. This frequently means working in conditions of virtual slavery, while local bosses make all the economic gains. Families are sometimes forced to give up their daughters as ‘opium brides’ to settle loans, because the opium crop has been destroyed by a government eradication team.¹² Armed criminals may be able to provide protection, yet the costs may be much more than the taxes used to maintain a regular police force.

Those who try to avoid living under such a system face violence and coercion.¹³

The SDGs are barely touching the places where peacebuilding challenges are most urgent – the margins and the borderlands where violence, fragility and displacement are rife.

Despite the dangers of engaging with illicit drug economies, they can, counterintuitively, benefit communities surviving on the margins.¹⁴

However, SDG 16 and other related goals, targets and indicators do not currently consider illicit drug crop economies to be a relevant factor in peacebuilding. In fact, flawed assumptions persist that illicit economies can only be sources of instability,¹⁵ and that the communities engaged in them are ‘peace spoilers’.¹⁶

Overall, the SDGs reflect the conventional view that illicit drug crop economies lie outside the development sphere. Instead of being seen as integral to the lives and livelihoods of those living on the margins, these economies are treated as a ‘distortion’ or pathology that must be isolated, combatted and destroyed. Therefore, law enforcement – including policies associated with the war on drugs – rather than development and peacebuilding are at the leading edge of efforts to combat drug economies in fragile, borderland regions.

This agenda risks undermining collective efforts to achieve the SDGs, potentially leaving communities in these regions even further behind – the track-record of the ‘war on drugs’ would certainly suggest as much.

What are “borderlands” and why do they matter?

In countries undergoing war-to-peace transitions, borderland regions frequently experience continuing violence over the terms of the post-war political settlement. In otherwise stable states, these regions may be chronically violent places, with higher rates of homicide and human rights abuses than in many war zones.

These marginal spaces - geographical as well as economic sectors marginalised from the mainstream economy - are frequently zones of extreme and chronic poverty. People depend upon the informal, illicit or criminal economies to make a living, and the influence of the state is weak or fitful. These regions seem to be largely immune to development successes celebrated at the national and international levels.

The reform and justice processes at the heart of peacebuilding, which may take root in the centre of a “post-conflict” society, often never reach these margins. When viewed from these regions, “peace” often looks

Despite the dangers of illicit drug economies, they can benefit communities surviving on the margins.

very different compared to the standpoint of those living at the centre.

As a result, these neglected borderlands continue to be the scene of chronic violence and human rights violations. Zones of extreme poverty, they are home to communities that the SDGs promised to prioritise when they pledged to leave no one behind. Because borderlands often straddle international borders, their illicit economies cannot be addressed by a single state; subnational and regional approaches are vital.

Only by understanding the borderland context, and the role of illicit drug crop economies in them, can we build peace and drive development.¹⁷

A consortium to map the journey from war to peace

For countries with sizeable illicit drug crop economies, such as Afghanistan, Myanmar and Colombia, the question of how to transform from a war to peace economy is particularly urgent. Better understanding the role of illicit drugs economies within these contexts is a big part of solving this puzzle.

That's why a major four-year consortium of global research networks and institutions has been set up by the Drugs and (Dis)order Research Project and funded by the UK's Global Challenges Research Fund.¹⁸ It is developing and testing approaches to integrate policies on drugs, development, peacebuilding and security based on longitudinal research in the borderlands of these three conflict-affected countries.

Why the war on drugs hasn't worked

Trillions of dollars have been spent attempting to tackle illicit drug economies, but the problem continues to grow.¹⁹ In his preface to the UN World Drug Report 2018, UNODC Executive Director Yury Fedotov emphasised that the production of opium and manufacture of cocaine today are 'at the highest levels ever recorded'.²⁰

According to the latest estimates, the global value of the illicit drug market could be between US\$300 and US\$600 billion a year. The vast majority of this enormous sum is captured by traffickers, while less than one percent of the final retail price goes to farmers.²¹ At such a scale and depth, it creates its own political, economic and financial infrastructures that put it well beyond the capacity of straightforward law enforcement to solve. Because the drugs market is more profitable than the trade in other consumable items like meat, wheat, coffee and tea, the supply and distribution chains it creates – along with the income and employment it generates – make it a development, as well as a legal, problem to solve.

So far, the two strategic pillars of the "war on drugs" – the eradication of illicit crops and the militarisation of the fight against drug gangs – have both been a disaster. Crop eradication has caused displacement and deforestation, while doing little to reduce cultivation levels. Aerial fumigation – the spraying of carcinogenic chemicals on illicit crops – has damaged people's health and their environment. And the use of the military in law enforcement operations has led to egregious human rights abuses.²²

Summarising an October 2018 report by the International Drug Policy Consortium, a global network of 177 NGOs, a journalist stated: 'Rivers of blood are being spilled in Southeast Asia in the name of countering narcotics.'²³ Since 2016, there have been an estimated 27,000 extrajudicial killings in the Philippines related to President Duterte's war on drugs.²⁴ Despite the chorus of condemnation from around the world, Sri Lanka's president has praised the Philippines' "war on drugs",²⁵ while Bangladesh is adopting the same tactics.²⁶ It has become a case of the purported cure being much worse than the disease.

Since 2016, there have been an estimated 27,000 extra-judicial killings in the Philippines related to its "war on drugs" – an approach that has been praised by Sri Lanka's president, and increasingly adopted by Bangladesh.

International Drug Policy Consortium, *Taking Stock: A Decade of Drug Policy*, October 2018

The “war on drugs” and its militarised response to illicit economies actually threatens progress on the SDGs.

The denial of economic, social and cultural rights is frequently both a driver and an outcome of state fragility, armed conflict and illicit economies. Systematic discrimination and economic and social inequalities, competition over resources, and the exclusion of communities from economic development all perpetuate cycles of deprivation and exclusion.²⁷

Violence can result in the denial of civil and political rights for communities, particular those at the margins, who face killings, displacement, and disrupted access to health and livelihoods. The continuing militarisation of the “war on drugs” has translated into a sustained and often devastating attack on human rights. The Philippines, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are now considering bills to reinstate the death penalty for drugs offences, and thus join the 33 jurisdictions worldwide – including China and Indonesia – where drug offenders are executed.²⁸

People who defend human rights in areas with sizeable illicit economies are increasingly at risk. In Colombia, at least 155 human rights defenders were killed in 2018 alone. Since the beginning of 2019, one human rights defender has been killed there every 2.5 days on average.²⁹ In 2017 and 2018, 47 members of the peasant farmer’s National Coordination for Cultivators of Coca, Amapola, and Marijuana – which gives cultivators of illicit crops a voice – were killed for promoting voluntary crop substitution and more humane public policies on illicit crops.³⁰

The “war on drugs” and its militarised response to illicit economies actually threatens progress on the SDGs and human rights obligations. Drugs and development policy must complement each other³¹ to address the fundamental problem: the marginalisation and exclusion of these territories and communities.

Not just a war

The “war on drugs” is by no means the only existing strategy for tackling global drugs use. In fact, the “war on drugs” is not a UN policy nor does it have a UN mandate: the UN has not declared or sanctioned any such war.

The UN has mandated three conventions to be implemented by the criminal justice system (although they are the subject of disagreements within the UN)

- the prohibition of plant-based drugs, including cocaine, heroin and cannabis, with some exceptions, such as for medical use
- the prohibition of synthetically manufactured substances that affect mind and behaviour, such as amphetamines or barbiturates
- the criminalisation of illicit drug cultivation, trafficking, manufacture, sale, possession and money laundering.

Another anti-drug approach is “harm reduction”. It is a set of strategies designed to reduce the negative consequences of drug use – from safer use to managed use to abstinence – though again there is dispute among UN members about the approach.³²

In practice, different countries and actors take different approaches, from more hardline approaches from states such as China and the Philippines, to experiments in legalisation in the United States,³³ Latin America and Europe. There are increasing efforts to establish counter-narcotic strategies that prioritise pro-poor development, align anti-drugs policy with the SDGs, and move away from the militarised approach inherent in the “war on drugs”. While welcome, the evidence base to support such policy reform remains weak. It is unclear how these seemingly opposed policy fields – drugs and development – can be reconciled in practice.

Global illicit
drug market =
\$300-600
billion a year.

The poorest, who are furthest behind, often engage in illicit crop production despite the violence and coercion. Their marginalisation and exclusion from markets and state protection give them almost no other choice.

Selected SDG goals, targets and indicators relevant to tackling illicit economies

The important global framework and commitments within the SDGs rely on nation-states as the primary unit of analysis. The SDGs are monitored in terms of how countries are able to deliver on their 169 targets and 232 indicators. Countries report to the UN via the Voluntary National Reviews on progress on these targets and indicators. While this monitoring system is an improvement on the previous system used in the Millennium Development Goals, it does not adequately track places on the margins. In addition, the drug trade is a cross-border trade – stand-alone country reports that monitor supply (in developing countries) but not demand (in rich countries) will not tell the whole story.

Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

- 1.4 By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance.

Goal's relevance: Two indicators measure access to basic services and secure tenure rights to land. But these do not examine the “why” and “how” of situations with no access.

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

- 2.b Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets, including through the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Development Round.

Goal's relevance: Subsidies in developed countries matter. For example, the decline in the global prices of cotton – due to subsidies to American cotton farmers – is one of the reasons why many Afghans are no longer planting cotton, and instead have adopted opium.

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

- 3.3 By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases.
- 3.5 Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol.

Goal's relevance: Unlikely to be achieved if people who use drugs are criminalised. Drug use is a public health problem, not a law enforcement problem.

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

- 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

Goal's relevance: Does not tackle problematic traditional norms that legitimise girls offered as payment for loans (opium brides).

Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

- 15.2 By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally.

Goal's relevance: Target needs to monitor reasons why survivors encroach on forest ecosystems to plant coca.

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

- 16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere
- 16.4 By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime
- 16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms

Goal's relevance: No other relevant indicator to monitor scale, depth and frequency of illicit economies.

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

17.1 Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection

Goal's relevance: Indicators rely exclusively on formal reporting, even in situations with larger informal economies.

The need to see drugs as a development issue

By treating illicit drug crop economies as primarily a matter of law enforcement, we're missing the opportunity to see them from a potentially much more productive perspective: as a development issue.

Applying a development lens highlights the fact that counter-narcotics policies risk undermining progress towards achieving the SDGs. It also indicates a need to think carefully about the costs and benefits of drug economies in developmental terms. This means taking seriously not only the harms generated by illicit economies, but also the positive roles they may play by providing a social safety net or even a means of wealth creation and upward mobility for poor, marginalised communities.

Equipped with a clearer and more rounded picture of how illicit economies really work and the distribution of costs and benefits in developmental terms, we could more fruitfully explore the ways in which drugs policy and development policy could be brought together in a complementary way to tackle these issues and accelerate our progress towards the SDGs.

So why do we currently lack such a picture?

As already noted, the UN orthodoxy sees illicit drug crop economies as separate from the development sphere, legitimising their destruction by law enforcement agencies. A vicious circle is complete when the responsibility for dealing with drug economies is handed

Equipped with a clearer and more rounded picture of how illicit economies really work and the distribution of costs and benefits in developmental terms, we could more fruitfully explore the ways in which drugs policy and development policy could be brought together

over to security forces who have no interest in exploring their developmental impacts (both negative and positive), nor the ability to do so.

Drug economies are frequently ignored because researchers, policy-makers and non-governmental organisations would prefer not to engage with this “sensitive” area. There is also the problem that access for researchers can be difficult, and governments actively block or discourage such work. Even if the SDGs regarded illicit drug crop economies differently, there is a lack of data on their scale, depth and impact, because of an over-reliance on aggregated statistics collected by national governments. The nation-state clearly has a key role to play in people’s lives – from social protection to peacebuilding to economic development. But the SDGs’ reliance on the state as the unit of analysis leads to an underplaying of the sub-national and cross-border dimensions of conflict, fragility and illicit economies.

There is also a tendency in dominant narratives about illicit economies to fetishise drugs, separating them out from their social and economic contexts. These narratives tend to treat those involved as victims, rather than individuals with agency, who make difficult choices about how to survive (and sometimes thrive) in challenging circumstances. It is time to move beyond this state-centric and top-down view.

Beyond the state

One way of avoiding the state-centric methodological pitfall is to consider illicit drug economies as commodity chains that transcend borders. Heroin and cocaine come from producer countries, pass through transit countries, and most are ultimately consumed in its main markets in Europe or North America.

Within these chains, powerful incentives emerge. These often lead to a symbiosis between state and non-state actors that embed long-term corruption and erode state structures. In some areas, state or police forces may appear to be ‘cracking down’ on the illicit trades, but this may involve significant compromises; mutual interests are created, accommodations are made and ‘unholy’ alliances form. Certain countries have seen the emergence of state-sponsored protection rackets, defined as ‘informal institutions through which public officials refrain from enforcing the

law or apply it selectively, in exchange for a share of the profits'.³⁴

Viewing drug economies and their nuances in this way shows that single-country solutions or waging a war on supply but not on demand will not suffice.



Mules carry petrol that will be used to turn coca into coca paste. In this village about 450 kilometres south of Bogotá, Colombia, the coca trade is vital. It brings cash and employment to the local economies of such areas, which typically have poor roads and infrastructure, lack access to public services and state institutions, and are marginalised from markets. Photo courtesy of AP Photo/Ricardo Mazalan.

The consequences of the drugs and development blind spot

This failure to understand the wider role of drug cultivation comes with real-life consequences for ordinary people, and missed development and peacebuilding opportunities. Take the role of women in illicit and informal economies.

As communities move from war to peace, there are community discussions about how best to rebuild lives and livelihoods – the most profitable choice of crops, where to get and how to use credit, how to forge fruitful relationships with local authorities, and so on. In Christian Aid's experience in Colombia, women are often taking the lead in these discussions.

One intensely debated government policy in Colombia requires families to sign a legally binding contract not to

The failure to understand the wider role of drug cultivation comes with real-life consequences for ordinary people.

plant coca and to switch to another crop. To date, up to 90,000 substitution agreements appear to have been signed. But many women heads of household are baulking. They maintain that coca is “the better employer”, as it provides more income opportunities for women than other crops or activities. So they are refraining from signing the agreements, despite the risks of non-participation.³⁵

Understanding better how the illicit drug economy in Colombia is embedded in local communities could have helped shape a more nuanced and ultimately effective way of moving people out of it.

This example does not lead to a simplistic argument that illicit economies are the answer to development problems; nor does it ignore the violence and coercion associated with them. But it does show that there are strong connections between drugs and development, which are being routinely ignored. This, in turn, leads to policies that undermine the survival strategies of those living on the margins.

The SDGs are an opportunity to encourage a new, context-relevant approach: one that commits governments to build counter-narcotics and peacebuilding initiatives on a sound foundation of research and apply a gender lens. First, they need to recognise the true impact of illicit economies and their role in development and peacebuilding. That will help commit governments to abandon the counter-productive policies that have historically defined their relationship to illicit drug economies.

Flawed efforts to bring drugs policy and development together

Already, in light of the failures of counter-narcotic policy, the consensus surrounding the “war on drugs” is falling apart.³⁶

Can policy-makers engaged with the SDGs provide a way to tackle this paradox, and unlock the puzzle of integrating development with counter-narcotics policies?

A cautionary tale from Afghanistan demonstrates just how difficult and complex a problem this is.

Governments need to abandon the orthodoxies that make illicit economies a ‘problem’ to be eradicated, and instead focus on addressing the deeper displacement, marginalisation and exclusion that drive people to rely on illicit solutions in the first place.



An armed militant stands alongside a farmer collecting resin from an opium poppy field in Helmand Valley, Afghanistan (April 25 2008). Photo courtesy of AP Shutterstock.

The paradox of development in southwestern Afghanistan

In around 2011, the Afghan government and donor agencies initiated the Food Zone Programme. It attempted to jumpstart development and wean farmers in Helmand Valley off opium production. It provided credit, agricultural advice, market information, better roads, and robust security and protection, while a strict opium ban was enforced. Soon, marked improvements in the well-being and income of these farmers were being recorded.

Yet the programme had an unexpected consequence. The financial support meant farmers had less need to rent their properties to landless families or hire sharecroppers. These land-poor households, who were not eligible for programme support, migrated in their thousands to the desert north of the Boghra canal, and opened up more fields for opium poppy farming. An otherwise successful development programme further marginalised and excluded land-poor communities.

In the desert, the migrants, with loans from opium traders, bought land, built houses, sank deep wells, and continued the settlement of the desert. By 2013, a transformation had occurred: an additional 300,000 hectares of agricultural land was created, supporting hundreds of thousands of people.³⁷

Illicit drug crop economies as sources of order and disorder

Counter-intuitive as it may seem, illicit drugs have been a source of order as well as disorder. While violence and coercion are often part of the reason for that order, illicit crops and drugs have played key roles in preventing economic collapse and settling disputes, and have enabled marginalised territories to enjoy access to markets again,³⁸ as the cases of Myanmar and Colombia show.

In **Myanmar**, opium-financed rebel armies did not expand after a dramatic increase in opium and heroin production after 1989. Instead, many demobilised as deals around the drug economy were struck between rebel armies and the Burmese armed forces. Allowing the armed groups to maintain their involvement in the illicit drugs trade, while allowing them to invest profits in the legal economy, provided the foundation that helped stabilise the ceasefires. Consequently, levels of outright armed conflict in parts of Myanmar's borderlands reduced.³⁹

Opium may have also prevented the collapse of the national economy under the weight of punitive international sanctions. Some of Myanmar's biggest commercial firms and private sector employers emerged despite the sanctions, capitalised by revenues from the illicit drugs trade.⁴⁰ The Asia World conglomerate, for example, whose founder was a key player in the drug economy, went on to build roads, airports, ports and Myanmar's new capital, Naypyidaw – a clear indication of drug revenues providing funds for development.⁴¹

The coca economy also revived Putumayo, a marginalised territory in southern **Colombia**. Villages that became centres of trade in coca paste consequently transformed into small 'boom towns': hotels were set up, transportation expanded, and demand for goods like cars, chainsaws, outboard motors and firearms increased. Thousands of migrants from across the country came to Putumayo and found work. As the volume of transactions expanded, a local financial system consolidated. Per capita bank deposits in Putumayo grew from 179 pesos in 1995, to 1,049 pesos in 2005: a more than five-fold increase in a decade of coca-led growth.⁴²

Counter-intuitive as it may seem, illicit drugs have been a source of order as well as disorder. Violence and coercion are often part of the reason for that order.

These examples demonstrate why eradication – the standard official response to illicit drug economies – should not be the only option. It should be considered alongside and properly sequenced with other development interventions.⁴³

The majority of Colombian coca farmers have agreed to reduce cultivation and shift to other crops.

But will they get **access to land, public services, and infrastructure** needed to reconstruct livelihoods in other crops?

The need to see illicit drugs economies as a peacebuilding issue

Eradication has frequently been the driving policy in post-war Afghanistan, Colombia and Myanmar, but in each case there has been a huge expansion of illicit drug cultivation following the signing of peace agreements or agreement of a ceasefire.⁴⁴ Perhaps this is no coincidence.

Peace processes should not be aimed only at reducing the number of fighters and weapons. They must also look at how they can deal with the potentially destabilising effects of war economies. Governments have typically used three strategies: co-option, criminalisation and neglect.⁴⁵ Here is a brief overview of each.

Co-option

Offering non-state powerbrokers formal positions or other economic opportunities in a post-war settlement.

Pros May prevent confrontations with groups the state can't control by force. In some cases, such groups are better able to provide security, basic services and employment in borderland communities than the state. Giving them these responsibilities formally may prevent these services being disrupted in the immediate aftermath of a peace agreement.⁴⁶

Cons It risks conferring legitimacy on abusive warlords⁴⁷ and entrenching corrupt patronage networks into the formal system.

Used in Afghanistan, Sudan, El Salvador, and elsewhere.⁴⁸

Criminalisation: Cracking down on the illicit drugs economy.

Pros Judicious targeting of illicit economies may deprive belligerents of the resources they need to continue fighting and encourage them to seek peace.

Cons Linking insurgency with crime often underplays political grievances.⁴⁹ Casting insurgents as criminals may avoid political solutions that are necessary for long-term stability⁵⁰ or tackle the symptoms without addressing the root causes of violence.⁵¹ It also fails to

recognise that illicit economies have benefitted many borderland communities.⁵²

Used in Colombia as part of the US programme started in 2000 to use development aid, military support, and diplomatic pressure to escalate the war on drugs and against leftist insurgents.⁵³ In Afghanistan, opium bans were also enforced through the 2000s in the context of state-building efforts in the country.⁵⁴

Neglect Addressing high-level political and security issues during the peace process while paying less attention to illicit economies.

Pros Can simplify and accelerate peace processes.⁵⁵

Cons Failing to address particularly exploitative or violent aspects of war economies can result in continuing armed violence and the strengthening of local militias.

Used in Myanmar, where opium cultivation in the border regions increased without obvious state intervention, and where increases in opium yields corresponded to decreases in armed confrontations.⁵⁶

There is no clear consensus on which approach is most likely to succeed. However, the literature suggests that peace agreements that fail to sufficiently account for how illicit economies shape peace settlements are more likely to produce unstable and highly criminalised post-war regimes.⁵⁷ Nuanced strategies have the best chance of improving prospects for peace and the widespread criminalisation of the informal economy is not effective. Crop eradication policies are deeply unpopular, potentially destabilising and often punish the most vulnerable. Formal agreements that take into account existing political settlements, and how they are shaped by illicit economies, are more likely to succeed.⁵⁸

There is a need to acknowledge and understand the significant tensions and trade-offs that exist between securing short-term stability and addressing longer-term drivers of violence and poverty. Policies and approaches to addressing illicit drug crop economies need to assess any risks or unintended consequences. Interventions to reduce violence and deal with war economies can be ineffectual or counter-productive, when they fail to analyse and engage effectively with underlying

configurations of power and processes of elite bargaining in conflict-affected states.⁵⁹

Colombia

The unfulfilled promise of a new approach

There are reasons to believe that, in Colombia, some of these more nuanced strategies are finally being employed to advance the cause of peace.

After two decades and billions of dollars spent in Colombia on the archetypical counter-narcotics drive of the "war on drugs", coca cultivation reached an historic high in 2017. But the agreement signed in 2016 between the Colombian government and the FARC guerrillas is the first-ever legally binding peace treaty to include tackling the illicit economy in its agenda.

According to the agreement, which received input from coca growers themselves, farmers would be able to take advantage of alternative development schemes while reducing their reliance on the illicit crop.

However, the threat of forced eradication remains and the proper sequencing of crop reduction has been ignored, with farmers compelled to eradicate large swaths of coca crops instead of gradually reducing their dependence.

The counter-narcotics element of the agreement relies mainly on providing cash-compensation to farmers, in conditions that are far from voluntary.

In practice, forced eradication continues to be used alongside and in similar proportions to crop-substitution initiatives – "Colombia's two anti-coca strategies," notes *The Economist*, "are at war with each other." The final goal remains the reduction of hectares under cultivation, rather than addressing the marginalisation and exclusion that drives people into the drug economy.

Nevertheless, the willingness of farmers to comply with the agreement has been unprecedented: the majority of coca growers have reportedly agreed to accept the proposals. This attitude reaffirms the often-heard lament of Colombian farmers that they cultivate coca only as a last resort, and would willingly stop if other viable options were available. It also undermines the impression, common in Colombia, that the farmers are mere profit-driven criminals, or "narco-cultivadores."

'Colombia's two anti-coca strategies are at war with each other.'

The Economist

Recommendations and policy implications

A new approach to transforming illicit drug crop economies is needed in order to support sustainable transitions that achieve the targets and ambition of the SDGs. Analysis and policy coherence are required to ensure that drugs and development policies are not working at cross purposes. We offer the following recommendations to better align peacebuilding, the tackling of illicit drug crop economies, and SDG 16.

Address the blind spot in SDG 16 and engage systemically with the interaction between drug economies and development. States need to ensure that the indicators and monitoring mechanisms for SDG 16 recognise and address the complex interactions between drug economies, development and peacebuilding. Reaching marginalised communities in borderlands requires an approach that goes beyond a state-centric model to look at how men and women in local communities mitigate risks through illicit activities; how they access credit despite the absence of formal credit providers; how they find informal income sources; and what relationships they form and deals they strike to obtain protection.

Recognise illicit drug crop economies as a human rights issue. States should carefully consider human rights obligations when seeking to transition from war to peace economies. Routinely stigmatised and criminalised, communities surviving on illicit economic activities are typically denied their human rights, particularly access to justice and economic, social and cultural rights. The voices representing these communities must be heard and their human rights respected, protected and fulfilled. SDG monitoring should provide communities with alternative development opportunities, before embarking on eradication campaigns that wantonly destroy livelihoods and, in the worst cases, kill and maim.

Abandon the approaches of the “war on drugs” and change the measure of success. Governments, regional and international bodies and institutions should abandon the counter-productive and damaging policies that have historically defined their relationship to illicit drug economies. The widespread criminalisation of the

informal economy is not effective. The SDGs are an opportunity to encourage a new, contextualised approach, one that commits governments to build counter-narcotics and peacebuilding initiatives on a sound foundation of research and understanding. If the aim of counter-narcotics policy is to reduce people's reliance on illicit crops and create peaceful transitions from armed conflict, the criteria of success should not be metrics like "reduction in hectares cultivated" or "kilograms of drugs seized". They should be measures of economic development, access to public services, poverty reduction, respect for human rights, levels of human security, confidence in the state, and access to meaningful employment.

Acknowledge trade-offs and mitigate harm. Particular counter-narcotics policies risk endangering peace as well as having long-term consequences for development goals. Policies and approaches to addressing illicit drug crop economies need to assess any risks or unintended consequences. Peace processes need a more rigorous analysis of how interventions are likely to impact on existing power dynamics and elite behaviour.

Ensure illicit drugs are addressed in peace processes. States should apply nuanced strategies when dealing with transitions from war to peace economies. These have the best chance of improving prospects for peace. Crop eradication policies are deeply unpopular and potentially destabilising. Formal peace agreements that take into account existing political settlements – and how they are shaped by illicit economies – are more likely to succeed. Despite the violence and coercion, under certain conditions, illicit economies may fill gaps in building peace and reconstructing livelihoods. Rather than seeing illicit economies as problems to be solved by law enforcement operations, peace agreements are more likely to build sustainable peace if they adopt nuanced "do no harm" strategies and provide people with secure land tenure, access to public services, and alternative economic opportunities to address the factors that attract poor subsistence farmers to illicit activities in the first place. Finally, securitised/ militarised responses should not be the core of counter-narcotics or peacebuilding initiatives, but should complement locally sensitive development programmes.

Rather than seeing illicit economies as problems to be solved by law enforcement operations, peace agreements are more likely to build sustainable peace if they adopt nuanced "do no harm" strategies and provide people with secure land tenure, access to public services, and alternative economic opportunities to address the factors that attract poor subsistence farmers to illicit activities in the first place.'

Focus on the margins in borderland areas and listen to women and the real experts. Economically and geographically marginal regions should become central to any war-to-peace transition, with governments ensuring their political settlements are inclusive and bridge the conflicting priorities and interests of the centre and peripheries. States should then invest in further research and understanding of the perspectives of those living in the borderlands, and build (and fund) programmes that relate to this. Women often step into larger roles in the aftermath of conflict⁶⁰ – making more decisions on everything from crop choice to use of credit, and having a growing influence in forgiving enemies and rebuilding community ties. Regardless of the context and situation, women’s insights and experiences need to be systematically documented by donors and other development actors to inform the design of development programmes. The communities involved in illicit drug economies are the real experts on resilience and survival. Policy-makers should learn from them and apply those lessons as they design their programmes.

Endnotes

- ¹ There are various estimates, including those published by the US-based Drug Policy Alliance, which states that 'the drug war is responsible for trillions of wasted tax dollars and misallocated government spending, as well as devastating human costs that far outweigh the damage caused by drugs alone'. See <http://www.drugpolicy.org/issues/making-economic-sense>
- ² Endnote 9.
- ³ Bhatia, Jasmine (May 2019). "Unsettling the Peace? The Role of Illicit Economies in Peace Processes". Draft paper presented at the 2019 Conference of the International Society for the Study of Drug Policies (ISSDP) in Paris.
- ⁴ Cracks in the consensus is evident in the holding of the UN General Assembly Special Session on Drugs in April 2016, three years ahead of schedule. Some countries bearing the brunt of the war on drugs – Colombia, Mexico, El Salvador – successfully pushed the Special Session to be held earlier because of the urgency of the challenges they faced. For more see the UNGASS Outcome Document at: <https://www.unodc.org/documents/postunga/ss2016/outcome/V1603301-E.pdf>
- ⁵ See Endnote 3.
- ⁶ See Endnote 18
- ⁷ Endnote 20.
- ⁸ GCRF Drugs and (dis)order: Building sustainable peacetime economies in the aftermath of war' is a major new £7million research project led by Professor Jonathan Goodhand in the Department of Development Studies at SOAS University of London. It is funded by The Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) Research Councils UK Collective Fund. <https://www.soas.ac.uk/drugs-and-disorder/>
- ⁹ As evidenced from focus group discussions conducted in January to March 2019 by Christian Aid in Colombia.
- ¹⁰ For a full list of all 17 SDGs with its 169 targets and 232 indicators, please see the UN's SDG website <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/indicators-list/>. The SDGs are available in text and spreadsheet.
- ¹¹ The Stockholm Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) refer to 'dangerous places' as territories in the top 25% in terms of violent death rates and in addition are the sources of 40% of the world's refugees and internally-displaced persons. Such territories are found inside a total of 110 countries. See the SIPRI 2017 Yearbook - https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/SIPRI_YB17c06.pdf
- ¹² Newsweek (29 Mar 2008). "Opium Brides of Afghanistan" in Newsweek. Digital edition, by Sami Yousafzai <http://www.newsweek.com/opium-brides-afghanistan-84509>.
Hoonsuwan, Monischa (9 Feb 2012). "Afghanistan's Opium Brides" in The Atlantic. Digital edition, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/02/afghanistans-opium-child-brides/252638/>
Nawa, Fariba (7 Mar 2012). "The Truth About Opium Brides" in Foreign Affairs. Digital edition, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2012-03-07/truth-about-opium-brides>
See also the Pulitzer Center's series "Too Young To Wed: The Secret World of Child Brides"
<https://pulitzercenter.org/projects/child-brides-child-marriage-too-young-to-wed>
- ¹³ See Lessing, Benjamin (2017). *Making Peace in Drug Wars: Crackdowns and Cartels in Latin America*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Yashar, Deborah (2018) *Homicidal Ecologies: Illicit Economies and Complicit States in Latin America*. New York: Cambridge University Press
- ¹⁴ Over the last few years, more research papers have been published elaborating on a wider range of context-specific impacts of illicit drug economies as sources of both order and disorder. See for example:
 - a) Goodhand, Jonathan (May 2019). "Re-imagining the Narco Frontier: War Economies and Post-War Transitions". Draft paper under review and presented at the 2019 Conference of the International Society for the Study of Drug Policies (ISSDP) in Paris.
 - b) The case studies by Filippo de Danieli (Tajikistan), David Mansfield and Paul Fishstein (Afghanistan), Christina Anderson (Mali), and Jacobo Grajales (Colombia) published by Christian Aid and compiled in Gutierrez, Eric (October 2015), "Drugs and illicit practices: Assessing their impact on development and governance", in <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/2017-08/drugs-illicit-practices-impact-development-governance-october-2015.pdf>.
 - c) Cohen, P.T. (2013), "Symbolic dimensions of the anti-opium campaign in Laos" in *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, 24(2), pp. 177-192.
 - d) Meehan, Patrick (2011). "Drugs, insurgency and state-building in Burma: Why the drugs trade is central to Burma's changing political order" in *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 42 (3), pp. 376-404.
- ¹⁵ In the World Drug Report 2010, for example, the UNODC makes the bold claim that "to generate the heroin needed to satisfy global demand, thousands of hectares and hundreds of thousands of workers must be employed without state interference, and the best deterrence for state interference with this process is a rebel army. Without an active conflict, heroin production can be eliminated" (p.232). Such assumptions have been challenged by subsequent research, such as those listed in Endnote 5 above. In Gutierrez, Eric (May 2019). "The Paradox of Illicit Economies: When Development and Drug Policy Orthodoxy Meet Its Limits", questions were raised on why the 'Systematic Country Diagnostics' published by the World Bank, barely notices illicit drug crop economies and its impact on local communities and points out that the World Bank and the UNODC share similar assumptions (Draft paper under review and presented at the 2019 Conference of the International Society for the Study of Drug Policies (ISSDP) in Paris).
- ¹⁶ Bhatia, Jasmine (May 2019). "Unsettling the Peace? The Role of Illicit Economies in Peace Processes". Draft paper presented at the 2019 Conference of the International Society for the Study of Drug Policies (ISSDP) in Paris.
- ¹⁷ Borderlands, brokers and peacebuilding in Sri Lanka and Nepal: War to peace transitions viewed from the margins, Collaborating institutions: SOAS, University of Bath, Martin Chautari, Nepal, Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA), Sri Lanka, International Alert, <https://www.soas.ac.uk/development/projects/borderland-brokers-and-peacebuilding-in-sri-lanka-and-nepal/borderlands-brokers-and-peacebuilding-in-sri-lanka-and-nepal-war-to-peace-transitions-viewed-from-the-margins.html>
- ¹⁸ GCRF Drugs and (dis)order: Building sustainable peacetime economies in the aftermath of war' is a major new £7million four-year research project led by Professor Jonathan Goodhand in the Department of Development Studies at SOAS University of London. It is funded by The Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) Research Councils UK Collective Fund. <https://www.soas.ac.uk/drugs-and-disorder/>
- ¹⁹ There are various estimates, including those published by the US-based Drug Policy Alliance, which states that 'the drug war is responsible for trillions of wasted tax dollars and misallocated government spending, as well as devastating human costs that far outweigh the damage caused by drugs alone'. See <http://www.drugpolicy.org/issues/making-economic-sense>
- ²⁰ In his Preface to WDR 2018, Fedotov said: "We are facing a potential supply-driven expansion of drug markets, with production of opium and manufacture of cocaine at the highest levels ever recorded. Markets for cocaine and methamphetamine are extending beyond their usual regions and, while drug trafficking online using the darknet continues to represent only a fraction of drug trafficking as a whole, it continues to grow rapidly, despite successes in shutting down popular trading platforms." From page 1 of UNODC (2018). *World Drug Report 2018, Booklet 1, Executive Summary and Policy Implications*, UNODC: Vienna
- ²¹ Among illegal goods, only counterfeit activities are larger. May, C (2017), *Transnational Crime and the Developing World*, Global Financial Integrity www.gfintegrity.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Transnational_Crime-final.pdf; UNODC (2018), *World Drug Report 2017: Booklet 5, The Drug Problem and Organized Crime Illicit Financial Flows, Corruption and Terrorism*, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Vienna www.unodc.org/wdr2017/field/Booklet_5_NEXUS.pdf; UNODC (2001), *World Drug Report 2000*, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime www.unodc.org/pdf/world_drug_report_2000/report_2001-01-22_1.pdf For a discussion of the difficulties involved in measuring the size of black markets, see: Kilmer, B. Liccardo Pacula, R. (2009), *Estimating the size of the global drug market: A demand-side approach*, RAND Corporation www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/technical_reports/2009/RAND_TR711.pdf
- ²² An extended discussion of these developments is presented in *International Drug Policy Consortium* (October 2018). *Taking Stock: A Decade of Drug Policy – A Civil Society Shadow Report*. IDPC: London. <https://idpc.net/publications/2018/10/taking-stock/>

- stock-a-decade-of-drug-policy-a-civil-society-shadow-report,
- 23 Asia Times (3 November 2018). "Time for a Truce in Asia's War on Drugs", by Caleb Quinan in <https://www.asiatimes.com/2018/11/article/time-for-a-truce-in-asias-war-on-drugs/>, last accessed 20 June 2019.
- 24 See International Drug Policy Consortium, op. cit., p.59-60
- 25 Reuters (18 January 2019). "Activists decry Sri Lankan president's praise for Duterte's drug war" by Karen Lema, in <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-srilanka-drugs/activists-decry-sri-lankan-presidents-praise-for-dutertes-drugs-war-idUSKCN1PC0WB>, accessed 20 June 2019.
- 26 UCA News (12 March 2019). "Bangladesh's War on Drugs Not Tackling Root Causes" by Stephan Uttom and Rock Ronald Rozario in <https://www.ucanews.com/news/bangladesh-flawed-war-on-drugs-not-tackling-root-causes/84648>, accessed 20 June 2019.
- 27 Florian Krampe, Climate change, food security and sustaining peace, SIPRI Commentary, October 2017, <https://www.sipri.org/commentary/essay/2017/climate-change-food-security-and-sustaining-peace>
- 28 International Drug Policy Consortium (October 2018). Taking Stock: A Decade of Drug Policy – A Civil Society Shadow Report. IDPC: London. <https://idpc.net/publications/2018/10/taking-stock-a-decade-of-drug-policy-a-civil-society-shadow-report>, p 9
- 29 <https://reliefweb.int/report/colombia/while-uk-prepares-colombia-president-duque-s-visit-violence-against-human-rights>
- 30 Christian Aid coordinates directly with COCCAM in monitoring and preventing the killings of its members.
- 31 For full text of the UNGASS 2016 Outcome Document, see <https://www.unodc.org/documents/postungass2016/outcome/V1603301-E.pdf>
- 32 Jelsma, Martin (2003). "Drugs in the UN System: The Unwritten History of the 1998 United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Drugs" in International Journal of Drug Policy, p. 181-195. <http://www.tni.org/sites/www.tni.org/archives/unwritten.pdf>
- 33 The US is a leading hardline anti-drugs country, yet there are now 12 US states and territories where the recreational use of marijuana has been legalised.
- 34 See page 254 of Snyder, Richard and Angelica Duran-Martinez (2009). "Does illegality breed violence? Drug-trafficking and state-sponsored protection rackets", in *Crime, Law and Social Change* 52: 253-273. Springer International Publishing AG.
- 35 This observation emerged from Focus Group Discussions conducted by Christian Aid and COCCAM among displaced peasant households in previously rebel-held territory in central and southern Colombia.
- 36 Cracks in the consensus is evident in the holding of the UN General Assembly Special Session on Drugs in April 2016, three years ahead of schedule. Some countries bearing the brunt of the war on drugs – Colombia, Mexico, El Salvador – successfully pushed the Special Session to be held earlier because of the urgency of the challenges they faced. For more see the UNGASS Outcome Document at: <https://www.unodc.org/documents/postungass2016/outcome/V1603301-E.pdf>
- 37 Mansfield, David and Paul Fishstein. (November 2015). "Eyes (Still) Wide Shut: Counternarcotics in Transition in Afghanistan". Christian Aid Occasional Paper. Christian Aid: London. Modified and updated from the original, with permission from the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU). A two-minute video based on satellite and aerial imagery compiled by ALCIS is presented here – (<https://vimeo.com/173599228>).
- 38 Gutierrez, Eric (May 2019), op. cit.
- 39 Snyder, Richard and Angelica Duran-Martinez (2009), op. cit.
- 40 Meehan, Patrick (October 2015). "Opium in Shan State, Myanmar: The Political Economy of a Resurgent Crop", unpublished. Draft case study commissioned by Christian Aid, London.
- 41 Asia World and its founders and top executives were on the US Sanctions List for years and had been investigated for money laundering and its links to the drug trade. However, after the US government terminated its Burma Sanctions Program in October 2016, Asia World has become a fully legalised and legitimate multinational conglomerate. See https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/burma_fact_sheet_20161007.pdf
- 42 Torres, Maria Clara Bustamante (2011). *Estado y Coca en la Frontera Colombiana: El caso de Putumayo*. ODECOFI-CINEP: Bogota DC.
- 43 See <https://www.economist.com/asia/2012/04/21/addicted>, accessed 11 June 2019
- 44 Bhatia, Jasmine (May 2019). "Unsettling the Peace? The Role of Illicit Economies in Peace Processes". Draft paper presented at the 2019 Conference of the International Society for the Study of Drug Policies (ISSDP) in Paris.
- 45 Bhatia, Jasmine (May 2019), op. cit.
- 46 Ballentine, K. and H. Nitzschke (2013). Beyond greed and grievance: Policy lessons from studies in the political economy of armed conflict. Security and Development: Investing in Peace and Prosperity, 159.
- 47 Studdard, K. (2004). War Economies in a Regional Context: Overcoming the Challenges of Transformation. International Peace Academy: New York.
- 48 Giustozzi, A. (2003). Respectable warlords? the politics of state-building in post-Taleban Afghanistan. Crisis States Research Centre, London School of Economics and Political Science;
- Johnston, P. (2007). Negotiated settlements and government strategy in civil war: Evidence from Darfur. *Civil Wars* 9 (4), 359-377.
- Hartzell, C. and M. Hoddie (2003). Institutionalizing peace: Power sharing and post-civil war conflict management. *American Journal of Political Science* 47 (2), 318-332.
- 49 Kalyvas, S. N. (2015). How civil wars help explain organized crime and how they do not. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59 (8), 1517-1540.
- 50 Ballentine, K. and H. Nitzschke (2013), op. cit. p.159.
- 51 Studdard, K. (2004). op. cit.
- 52 Goodhand, J. (2008). Corrupting or consolidating the peace? The drugs economy and post-conflict peacebuilding in Afghanistan. *International Peacekeeping* 15 (3), 405-423.
- 53 Transnational Institute (April 2001). "Europe and Plan Colombia: Chronicle of a Commitment with an Uncomfortable Plan" in Debate Papers No. 1. <https://www.tni.org/files/download/debate1.pdf>, accessed 11 June 2019.
- 54 Mansfield, David (2016). A State Built on Sand: How Opium Undermined Afghanistan. C. Hurst and Co. (Publishers) Ltd, London.
- 55 Studdard, K. (2004). War Economies in a Regional Context: Overcoming the Challenges of Transformation. International Peace Academy: New York.
- 56 Meehan, Patrick (October 2015). "Opium in Shan State, Myanmar: The Political Economy of a Resurgent Crop", unpublished. Draft case study commissioned by Christian Aid, London.
- 57 See for example: Ballentine, K. and H. Nitzschke (2013), op. cit.
- b) Spear, J. (2006). From political economies of war to political economies of peace: The contribution of DDR after wars of predation. *Contemporary Security Policy* 27 (01), 168 - 189.
- 58 Studdard, K. (2004).. and Nitzschke, H. and Studdard, K. (2005), op. cit.
- 59 Elite Bargains and Political Deals Project, Synthesis Paper: Securing and Sustaining Elite Bargains that Reduce Violent Conflict, Christine Cheng, Jonathan Goodhand, Patrick Meehan, April 2018
- 60 As evidenced from focus group discussions conducted in January to March 2019 by Christian Aid in Colombia.

Contact us

Eric Gutierrez and Karol Balfe

kbalfe@christian-aid.org

egutierrez@christian-aid.org



England and Wales registered charity number. 1105851 Scotland charity number. SC039150 UK company number. 5171525 Registered with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC101631 Company number NI059154 Republic of Ireland Charity Commission number 20014162 Company number 426928. The Christian Aid name and logo are trademarks of Christian Aid © Christian Aid