



25/10/2002

[Press Release](#)
[United Nations](#)
AFG/210
SOC/NAR/819

**UNITED NATIONS DRUG
CONTROL AGENCY URGES
GREATER HELP**

**FOR [AFGHANS](#) IN FIGHT
AGAINST OPIUM CULTIVATION**

ROME, 24 October (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) -- The annual Afghanistan Opium Survey for 2002, conducted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (ODC), was presented at a press conference here today by the Executive Director of the Vienna-located agency, Antonio Maria Costa. He said [the survey](#) confirmed earlier indications of the considerable level of opium production in Afghanistan this year.

He said 90 per cent of cultivation was concentrated in just five provinces in Afghanistan: Helmand in the south, followed by Nangarhar in the east,

[Advertise here](#)

Badakhshan in the north, Uruzgan in the south/centre and Kandahar in the south.

"This year's survey", he told correspondents, "has been conducted under the most challenging circumstances because of security concerns. The methodology was therefore based on high-resolution satellite [images](#) complemented by extensive ground [verification](#) and targeted ground surveys".

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime -- formerly the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNDCP) -- has conducted annual opium surveys in Afghanistan since 1994, tracking the dramatic increase of the production in the Taliban years. By the late 1990s, Afghanistan provided about 70 per cent of global production of illicit opium, with Myanmar accounting for 22 per cent, and the Lao People's Democratic Republic about 3 per cent. Illicit opiates of [Afghan](#) origin were consumed by an estimated 9 million abusers worldwide, which is two-thirds of all opiate abusers in the world. According to estimates of the Office on Drugs and Crime, about half a million people have been involved in the international trade of illicit Afghan opiates (opium, morphine, heroin) in recent years.

The total opium production in Afghanistan this year is estimated to amount to 3,400 metric tons, which is still 25 per cent lower than the record production of 1999 (4,600 metric tons).

"The high level of opium cultivation in Afghanistan this year is not a manifestation of a failure of the Afghan authorities or of the international efforts to assist them in drug control. The planting (of the 2002 crop) took place during the total collapse of law and order in the autumn of 2001, long before the new government of Dr. Hamid Karzai was in place", Mr. Costa said.

See how a bottle
becomes a new
pair of jeans at

IWantToBeRecycled.org

 KEEP AMERICA
BEAUTIFUL

Give your garbage another life.
Recycle.



Release SOC/NAR/819

AFG/210

25

October 2002

He called for greater assistance to the Afghan authorities in carrying out their strong commitment to prevent opium cultivation. Immediately after assuming office, President Karzai issued a decree on 17 January, banning not only

cultivation but also the processing, trafficking and abuse of opiates. Last month, his government reiterated that position, reasserting the ban on opium poppy planting in the autumn.

"What is needed in the period ahead is much stronger international support in establishing and developing law enforcement institutions, and providing Afghan farmers with alternative, licit means of livelihood", Mr. Costa said.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime reopened its country office in Kabul in February and has appointed Mohammad Reza Amirkhizi as the country representative. The office has been engaged in a wide range of projects, which include strengthening the Afghan drug control bodies, assistance in law enforcement and the criminal justice sectors, and cross-border counter-narcotics cooperation with neighbouring States.

The Office is also working on a pilot social compact with farmers in Kandahar and Badakhshan provinces, providing them with small amounts of financial assistance on the understanding that they would grow commercial crops other than opium poppy. Another area of activity covers drug demand reduction. Following a quarter century-long military strife, a large segment of the Afghan population has become addicted to opium and heroin. The United Nations Office on

Drugs and Crime is analyzing the extent of drug abuse within the country and developing drug abuse prevention, [treatment](#) and rehabilitation services.

[Notes:](#)

(i) For further [information](#), Mohammad Reza Amirkhizi, of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Afghanistan may be reached at: +43 664 150 7179 (cellular); Kemal Kurspahic, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Vienna, may be called at +43 1 260 60 5629.

(ii) Copies of the [Executive Summary](#) of the Opium Survey are [available](#) on request from: United Nations Information Service, Vienna. (Tel: +43 1 260 60 4666; Fax: +43 1 260 60 5899; Email: UNIS@unvienna.org; homepage: www.unis.unvienna.org)

* * * * *

[United Nations](#)

This article comes from Science Blog. Copyright © 2004
<http://www.scienceblog.com/community>