

We just keep bagging these horrible rankings.

Andile Sicetsha by Andile Sicetsha 2019-01-11 12:12 in News

The United States' Department of State to Congress has published the 2018 International Narcotics Control Strategy (INCS) Report and surprise, surprise, South Africa has been ranked as the largest market for the sale of illicit drugs in sub-Saharan Africa.

The report was released in the first quarter of 2018 but has become of significance in South Africa after authorities in the Eastern Cape intercepted a shipment that held approximately R720-million worth of cocaine.

How illicit drugs make it to South Africa

Authorities believe that the cargo came from Brazil and was on its way to Singapore and India. This drug bust was the biggest in the history of South Africa and it prompted the conversation about the country's standing in the illicit drug market.

The INCS report recognises South Africa as the continent's biggest and most established economy. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that this would be the largest market for the sale of illicit drugs in comparison to our sub-Saharan neighbours.

INCS Report: The most-used illicit drug in South Africa

Narcos believe that South Africa acts as the transshipment destination of drugs that eventually make their way to Europe, from South America.

“A portion is distributed for local consumption and the remainder is trafficked internationally, often controlled by Nigerian criminal organizations,” the report states

Marijuana, referred to locally as ‘dagga’, according to the report, is the most consumed illicit drug in South Africa. 2018 was the year that saw legislation pass the recreational use of dagga and that is still being fine-tuned to cooperative standards. However, the report notes how dangerous the use of dagga is when it is mixed together with heroin to make a cocktail known locally as nyaope.

“Such drugs (nyaope) are often adulterated with other substances. Quantification of domestic drug use is difficult. The South Africa Police Service (SAPS) annual crime statistics indicate that drug-related crime continued to rise between April 2016 and March 2017.

“The stated goals of South Africa’s National Drug Master Plan are to “reduce illicit drug supply, demand, and harm,” but insufficient resources and limited capacity challenge implementation,” the report indicated.

Hawks: More collaboration with international anti-drug agencies will help

Hawks’ Brigadier Ebrahim Kadwa, speaking to Jane Dutton from eNCA, concurred with the quote stated above but was adamant that law enforcement can hurt the illicit drug market with more collaboration with international narcotics agencies.

“No police agency or country can, in an isolated fashion, deal with a global challenge and that is why you need global responses. In positioning ourselves in dealing with transnational organised crimes, in particular drug trafficking, we have reached a high premium on regional and international cooperation,” Kadwa stated.

Kadwa is of the firm belief that by strengthening the footprint of anti-drug operations in the sub-Saharan region, with international assistance, this illicit trade can be challenged.

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