

# Video: The Social Impacts and Economic Dimensions of the Drug Trade

By [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#) and [Mehrnews](#)  
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Region: [Asia](#), [Europe](#), [USA](#)  
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*Being a neighbor to one of the biggest producers of drugs in the world has caused the Islamic Republic of Iran to shoulder a heavy burden as one of the main routes for drug transport.*

Iran is at the forefront of the fight against drug trafficking and thousands of Iranian forces have been so far martyred to protect the world from the danger of drugs. Despite high economic and human costs, the Islamic Republic has been actively fighting drug trafficking over the past decades.

Iran has spent more than \$700 million on sealing its borders and preventing the transit of narcotics destined for European, Arab, and Central Asian countries.

The war on drug trade originating from some regional countries has claimed the lives of nearly 4,000 Iranian police officers over the past four decades.

According to reports, in 2018 alone, Iranian forces carried out 1,557 operations against drug traffickers, seizing approximately 807 tons of different types of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

Tehran has always asked for international help in such operations, noting that the other countries, especially European states, should take responsibility and play a positive role in this fight or face its threats themselves.

The issue of drugs is a global scourge and there is the need for wide-scale cooperation at the international level so as to tackle this problem. Therefore, the Islamic Republic of Iran has adopted an interactive approach with the global community concerning the issue of drugs and has virtually indicated that it spares no efforts in enhancing cooperation with other countries and international organizations in the campaign against illicit drugs.

On this basis, Iran has always voiced its resolve for countering illicit drugs and reducing its harms at the global level. Iran's performance in countering drug trafficking has been effective in maintaining the security of different regions of the globe.

On the eve of 'International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking' observed annually on 26 June, the geopolitical and economic dimensions of the drug trafficking were discussed with **Michel Chossudovsky**, Professor of Economics (emeritus) at the University of Ottawa.

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Addressing the geopolitical and economic dimensions of the drug trafficking Chossudovsky said,

“Despite President Trump’s announced US troop withdrawal, the Afghan opium trade continues to flourish. This multibillion-dollar operation is protected by US-NATO occupation forces on behalf of a nexus of powerful financial and criminal interests.”

“In 2004, the proceeds of the Afghan heroin trade yielded an estimated global revenue of the order of 90 billion dollars. Today a rough estimate based on US retail prices suggests that the global heroin market is above the 500 billion dollar mark. This multibillion-dollar hike is the result of a significant increase in the volume of heroin transacted Worldwide coupled with a moderate increase in retail prices.”

“Based on the most recent (UNODC) data (2017) opium production in Afghanistan is of the order of 9000 metric tons, which after processing and transformation is equivalent to approximately 900,000 kg. of pure heroin.”

Referring to the role of the US waged war on Afghanistan which resulted in an increase in opium production in the country, he noted,

“The 2001 war on Afghanistan served to restore as well as boost the multibillion-dollar drug trade. It has also contributed to the surge in heroin addiction in the US. Opium production had declined by more than 90 percent in 2001 as a result of the country’s drug eradication program. Immediately following the invasion and the occupation of Afghanistan by US-NATO troops, the production of opium regained its historical levels.”

He went on to say,

“The 2017 Afghanistan Opium Survey released in May 2018 by UNODC confirms that the farm areas allocated to opium are of the order of 328,000 hectares with opium production in excess of 9,000 tons.”

Answering a question about the reasons behind an increase in production of the opium in Afghanistan after being occupied by the US, Chossudovsky said that big money coming from the drug trade and political dimensions of the issue are the two main reasons behind the increase.

Referring to the political dimension of the issue he said for example **George Bush**, former US President’s family including his son and brother had good personal relations with heads and members of drug cartels in Mexico and Colombia.

Commenting on the significance of Iran’s role in the fight against drug trafficking, he said that as Iran shares a long border with Afghanistan so it plays a significant role in fighting drug trafficking on behalf of the international community and in protecting its national interest.

He added that people of Afghanistan that share historical relations with the Iranian people are victims of the international drug cartels.

On the seriousness of the European countries which are target market of the narcotic drugs in the fight against drug trafficking and fulfilling their international commitments in supporting Iran in the fight against drug trafficking, Chossudovsky believes European countries and generally the western countries not only have done nothing to fight drug trafficking but also they have been complicit in allowing drug trade.

He also added that the CIA which is behind allowing the entrance of the narcotic drugs to the US is using drugs as a tool to marginalize the black people community of the country.

Chossudovsky further said that due to increasing of synthetic drugs all over the world, pharmaceutical factories also have significant responsibility and role in combating drugs.

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**Michel Chossudovsky**

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