

Israel: Major International Cocaine Trafficking Hub

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A June UN Office on Drugs and Crime [World Drug Report](#) named Israel for its “star role.” More on that below.

Israel is a serial lawbreaker. Its rap sheet already overflows. This revelation adds another reprehensible black mark.

The [State Department](#)'s 2012 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report says:

“Israel’s illicit drug trade is regionally focused, with Israel as more of a transit country than a stand-alone significant market.”

“The authorities continue to be concerned with illegal pharmaceutical sales, retail businesses which are suspected money-laundering enterprises, and corruption accusations against public officials.”

An earlier [State Department](#) report said “the Israeli drug market continued to be characterized by high demand in nearly all sectors of society and a high availability of drugs including cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine, heroin, hashish and LSD.”

Drug trafficking and money laundering go hand-in-hand. On July 11, [Haaretz](#) headlined “US: Israeli played lead role in international drug money laundering ring.”

Israeli/Colombian Isaac Perez Guberek was named. “Ten Panamanian companies, 11 Colombian companies and one based in Rosh Ha’ayin allegedly built (a) network that laundered hundreds of millions of dollars of drug money.”

A State Department statement said:

“Isaac Perez Guberek Ravinovicz, a Colombian national, and his son, Henry Guberek Grimberg, a dual Colombian and Israeli national, lead a money laundering network based in Bogota, Colombia that launders narcotics proceeds on behalf of numerous drug trafficking organizations, including organizations based in Colombia.”

They “primarily rely upon the use of ostensibly legitimate textile companies within Colombia to engage in trade-based money laundering.”

A US Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of Florida press release added:

“(D)efendants are charged with conspiracy to launder the illegal proceeds from the manufacture, importation, sale, and distribution of a controlled substance.”

“If convicted, (they) face a possible maximum statutory sentence of up to 20 years in

prison.”

“Money launderers provide a critical service to narco-traffickers, helping them to wash, move, and hide their drug money.”

The US Treasury called father and son Guberek as well as “29 other individuals and entities. Specially Designated Narcotics Traffickers (SDNTs).”

On June 26, 2012, [Haaretz](#) headlined “IDF soldiers suspected of drug trafficking along Israel’s border with Egypt.”

Twelve soldiers and career junior officers were named. They were “arrested for trafficking in drugs worth some NIS 800,000 (about \$200,000).”

“The arrest sweep is one of the largest ever in the IDF.” Suspects are Gaza Division trackers. They’re deployed along Egypt’s border.

Their job is assuring no border breaches. According to IDF military police, “a sergeant first class and a conscript soldier were involved in smuggling heroine, cocaine, hashish and ecstasy.”

On June 21, they were arrested. Others were apprehended days earlier.

According to military police special investigations commander Lt. Col. Gil Mamon, an undercover agent bought drugs from one of the suspects.

Smuggling has been ongoing for months, he said. Three civilians were arrested on suspicion of involvement.

On October 19, [Haaretz](#) headlined “Israel becomes major hub in the international cocaine trade, abuse rising.”

Annual UN World Drug Reports discuss ongoing trends. Israel is a major abuser.

The International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) implements UN drug treaties and conventions.

In 2012, it named Brazil and Israel among “countries that are major manufacturers, exporters, importers and users of narcotic drugs.”

Israeli cocaine trafficking is especially significant. Israel’s Anti-Drug Authority (ADA) said cocaine use in Israel doubled from 2005 to 2009.

ADA rehabilitation unit head Haim Mal believes increased use reflects lifestyle changes.

“Whereas people in the past looked for drugs that would soothe them and produce peace of mind, now they are looking for drugs that will enable them to be more alert,” he said.

“Cocaine is a social drug that can be found in nightclubs in Israel’s major cities and among a wide range of users, most of them in the liberal professions.”

Usage is “a social phenomenon that has emerged in Israel as in other countries around the

world.”

Heroin damages people physically, he added. “Cocaine damages the soul.”

A young Israeli woman called “G” to maintain anonymity described her experience, saying:

“It was three in the morning and I had already had a number of drinks.”

“The washrooms were really crowded, but not always because of bursting bladders.”

“There was a disorderly lineup that was moving along very slowly. Sometimes the door opened and out would come two to four people, who had emerged from one of the stalls.”

“After about a quarter of an hour, or it might have been 20 minutes, it was my turn.”

“I went in with two friends. One of them took out a bag of coke and began to spread the stuff on a small surface.”

“He then used a credit card to arrange the coke in rows. I took out a 100-shekel note from my pocket, rolled it up and then each of us took turns snorting two rows.”

“At that moment, I still felt nothing. I went to the bar and ordered a vodka chaser. We all then went back to the dance floor. We danced up a storm and felt we could go on doing that forever.”

“Suddenly, you have this burst of energy. Everything was dark around me and I couldn’t give a damn about anyone. I was so full of self-confidence.”

According to the UN’s report, cocaine trafficking and consumption are increasing in developing Asian countries.

Israel was named among others. Cocaine arrived “fashionably late.” Amounts seized are similar to figures other countries report.

In Israel, 63 kilograms were seized in 2009. In 2010, it was 71. In 2011, it jumped to 264. In 2012, it dropped to 171. One pound = 0.454 kg.

Israeli authorities know these amounts are minuscule compared to what’s trafficked and consumed.

Cocaine, hashish and other illicit drugs are readily available. Supply meets demand.

Cocaine is called the drug of the rich. It’s not just about price. Traffickers call it “the drug that lifts you up, because it takes you to the best places imaginable but leaves you sharp and focused – king or queen of the world.”

Crack cocaine use isn’t widespread in Israel. At least not so far. Cocaine consumption began during Britain’s Mandate period.

In 1929, Tel Aviv police seized 800 grams. It was cheap compared to today. It cost about 300 Palestinian pounds.

In America, one gram of pure cocaine costs \$100 or more. Price varies according to where sold. It's much the same in Europe and elsewhere.

According to international law enforcement agencies, Peru became the world's leading cocaine exporting nation in 2011. In 2012, it trafficked an estimated 538 tons.

Colombia ranks second. In 2012, it exported an estimated 345 tons. Bolivia was third with about 265 tons.

Revenues are huge. Black money attracts organized crime. According to Israeli police:

"There are Israeli crime organizations (involved) with the world's major drug cartels."

"Criminals are measured by their ability to traffic huge quantities of drugs and today there are several Israeli criminals who can traffic impressive quantities around the world."

"Israeli drug criminals have a good reputation in the world because they meet several of the criteria in the field and because Israelis have global connections."

Israeli criminal ex-pats "never touch the drugs they traffic. They merely serve as middlemen."

"They open a 'cashbox,' namely, a shipping container holding several hundred kilograms of cocaine, and they know how to find investors to fund" it.

Recent police reports say a cashbox en route to Australia was opened. Israeli criminals were involved in the deal.

The police's International and Serious Crimes Unit arrested members of an international trafficking network earlier.

Some were ex-pats. They worked for Israeli crime boss Yitzhak Abergil.

His illicit activities included drug trafficking, money laundering, murder, extortion, embezzlement, illegal gambling and other crimes.

He operated in Israel, America and elsewhere. He was extradited to America. A 32-count indictment called his crime family one of Israel's most powerful. His operations continue without him.

In 2008, Israeli police broke up a major international drug trafficking ring. Huge amounts were sold. Other operations continue.

Israeli police conduct intelligence. They work with counterparts worldwide. According to an unnamed high-ranking official:

"Today we work with police forces all over the world on cases that involve not only Israel but also other countries."

"The information flows constantly between the police forces of different countries."

"Not only does the Israel Police have nothing to be ashamed of in connection with the

war on cocaine trafficking; it has a lot to be proud of.”

Cocaine is hugely profitable. In South America, a kilo (about 2.2 pounds) costs from \$3,000 to \$5,000.

According to an unnamed Israel Tax Authority drug and money laundering enforcement unit official:

“(Y)ou will almost always find cocaine in the possession of” couriers aboard flights from European countries and Israel.

Superintendent Noam Deshati heads Israel’s Ben Gurion International Airport police unit 747. Around 13 million passengers pass through the airport annually.

“You can bet your bottom dollar that we do not have the capacity for checking each and every one of them,” he said.

“Although we do not know whether there has been any increase in cocaine use, we do know that there has been an increase in the number of drug shipment seizures.”

Couriers are well paid. Some earn thousands of dollars. In return, they transit drugs. Doing so is high risk. Despite efforts to curb trafficking, it continues flourishing.

CIA involvement is longstanding. Peter Dale Scott’s books and articles provide invaluable information.

“Since at least 1950 there has been a global CIA-drug connection operating more or less continuously,” he said.

“The global drug connection is not just a lateral connection between CIA field operatives and their drug-trafficking contacts.”

“It is more significantly a global financial complex of hot money uniting prominent business, financial and government as well as underworld figures.”

Global money laundering runs up to around \$1.5 trillion annually. Most of it’s from illicit drugs. Israel is tiny compared to America. It stands out as a major global cocaine trafficking hub.

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