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PRECURSORS REPORT

International control of two additional fentanyl precursors and two groups of amphetamine-type stimulant precursors enters into force

On 3 December 2024, two fentanyl precursors and two series of closely related designer precursors of amphetamine-type stimulants (16 substances in total) were added to Table I of the 1988 Convention. The 16 precursors of amphetamine-type stimulants are all designer (custom-made) precursors with no known legitimate uses and no regular trade. The scheduling decisions by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs based on recommendations by INCB were the first of their kind as they involved several closely related chemicals which could all be used in illicit manufacture in the same manner.

Major trends in licit trade and trafficking of precursors

- The global quantity of ephedrines (i.e. ephedrine and pseudoephedrine in all forms) seized, at over 15 tons, surpassed the quantities seized in the previous two years combined. Ephedrine and pseudoephedrine are precursors with legitimate medical uses that can be diverted for the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine.
- Illicit methamphetamine manufacturing methods first observed in Mexico are now being encountered in South Asia and Southern Africa.
- Large quantities of amphetamine-based “captagon” have been seized in West Asia but no seizures of the required precursors were reported in the region.
- Canada, Mexico and the United States of America are the only countries that have reported notable seizures of fentanyl precursors. In October 2024, the Netherlands reported the first seizure of a fentanyl precursor in Europe.
- Trafficking in the heroin precursor acetic anhydride destined for Afghanistan continues, although on a smaller scale.
- Seized cocaine precursor potassium permanganate has predominantly been sourced from within the country in which the seizure has been made.
- More reports are being received of seizures of precursors and the illicit manufacture of synthetic cathinones.

Monitoring equipment and excipients used in illicit drug manufacture becomes key

INCB continued to promote the implementation of a strategic approach to address the use of equipment, such as tableting machines and excipients in illicit drug manufacture. A worldwide survey was conducted among Governments to better understand national action and international cooperation on the control of equipment. This led to INCB convening the fourth expert group meeting on illicit drug manufacturing equipment and article 13 of the 1988 Convention.



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During the reporting period, relevant authorities of different countries exchanged 130 equipment-related incidents through the Precursors Incident Communication System (PICS). The incidents involved seizures of new or second-hand custom-made or modified equipment. The majority of incidents (115) involved tableting machines, followed by punches and dies, reaction vessels, distillation apparatus, industrial mixers and glassware. Most of the incidents (109) were communicated by the United States with all the seizures being made at borders.

Preventing diversion of chemicals through the “know your industries” principle

INCB has continued to reiterate the crucial role of cooperation with the private sector as an effective strategy to prevent the diversion of and trafficking in chemicals used for illicit drug manufacture. In the reporting period, the Board conducted several national “mapping exercises” in cooperation with pilot countries. The mapping exercise is a national analysis, carried out under the guidance of INCB, of the different categories of industries that might be targeted by drug traffickers seeking to divert both controlled precursors and non-scheduled chemicals. The mapping exercises also include the identification of key partners in the private sector, such as industry associations and is one of the initial steps for establishing or strengthening public-private partnerships to prevent the diversion of chemicals and equipment into illicit drug manufacture.