

Regional and Global Overview of Illicit Drug Trafficking in the Maritime, Riverine and Port Domains in the Americas

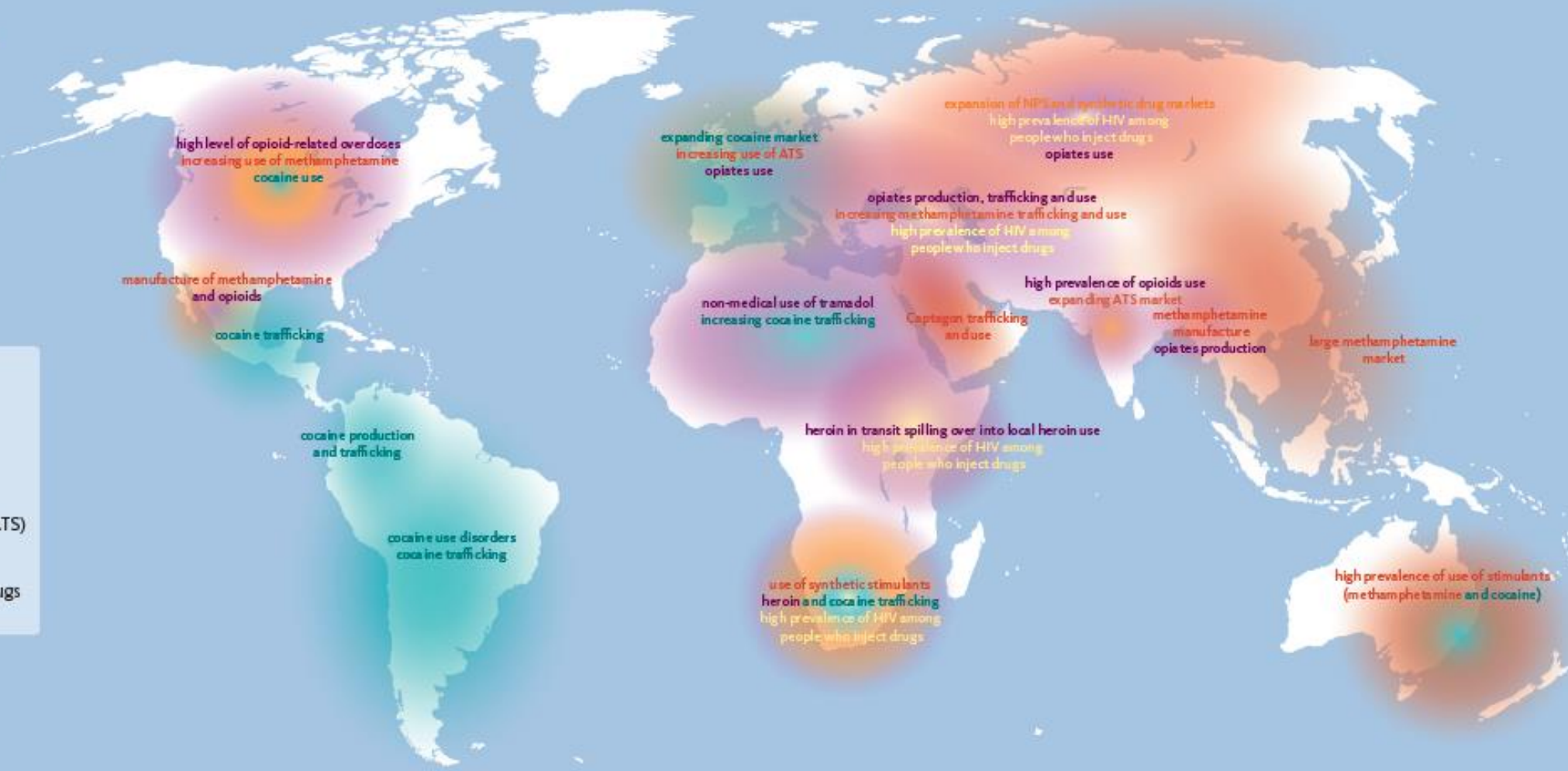






Guatemala City, November 2023



THE WORLD DRUG PROBLEM COMMON CHALLENGE, LOCAL DYNAMICS

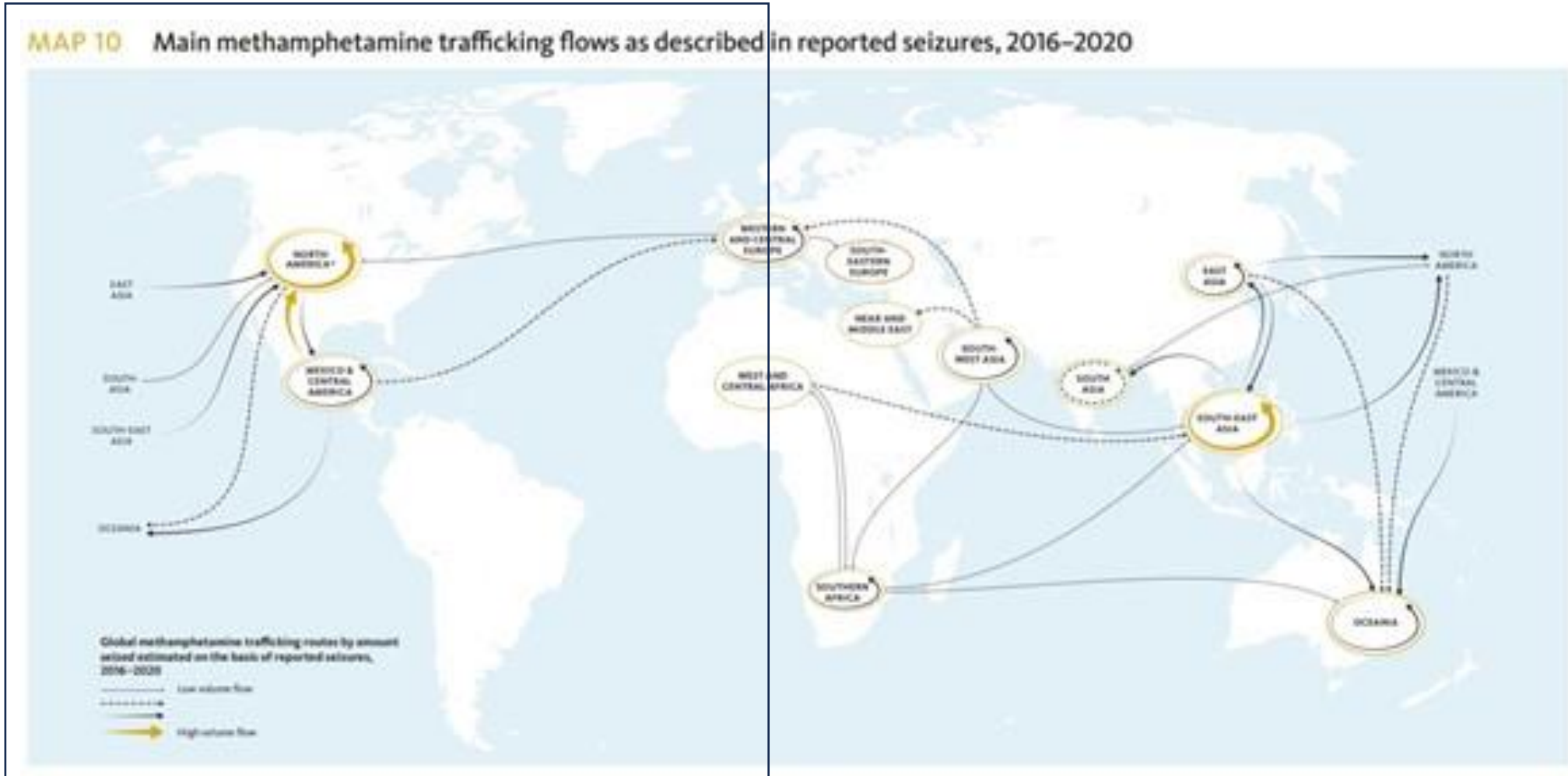
While cannabis trafficking and use affect all regions worldwide, other drug issues pose additional threats in different geographical locations.



-  Cocaine
-  Opioids/Opiates
-  Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS)
-  HIV among people who inject drugs

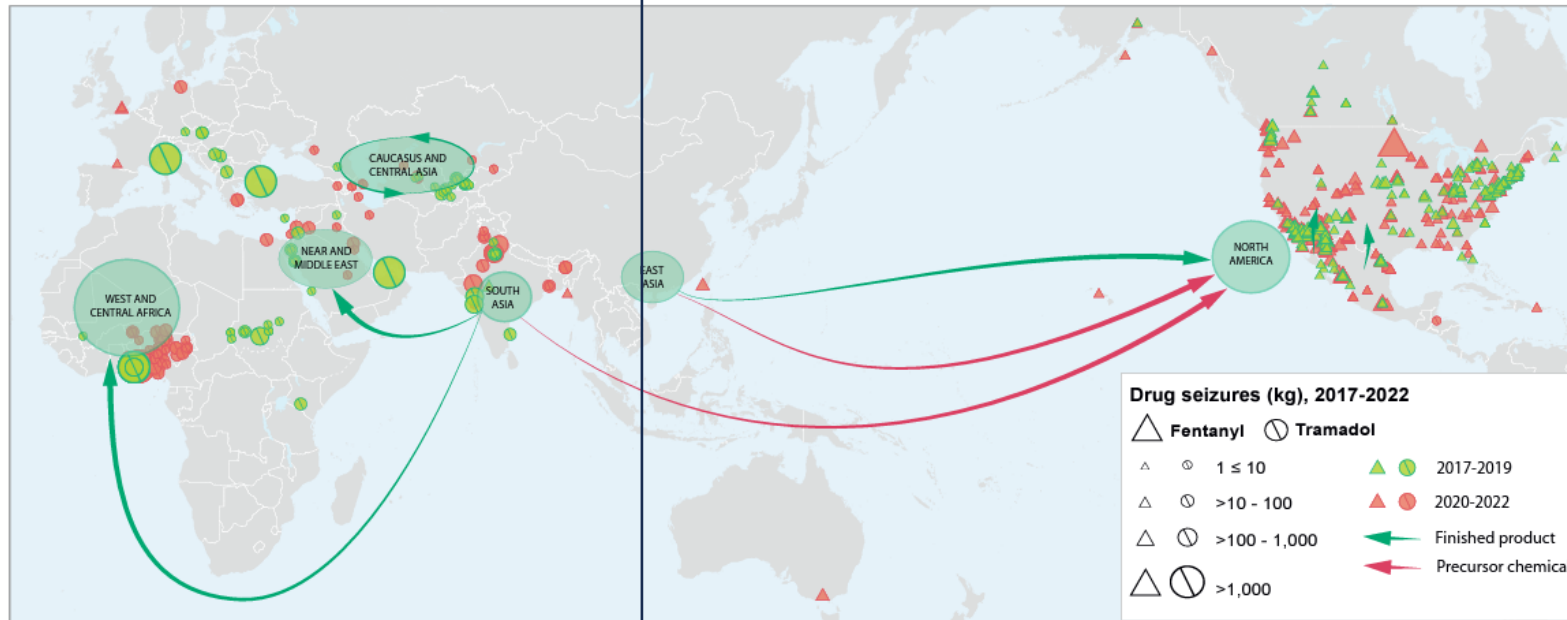


Main methamphetamine trafficking flows



Seizures of fentanyl and precursors

MAP 1 Significant individual Fentanyl and Tramadol seizures over 1 kg in weight, 2017-2022



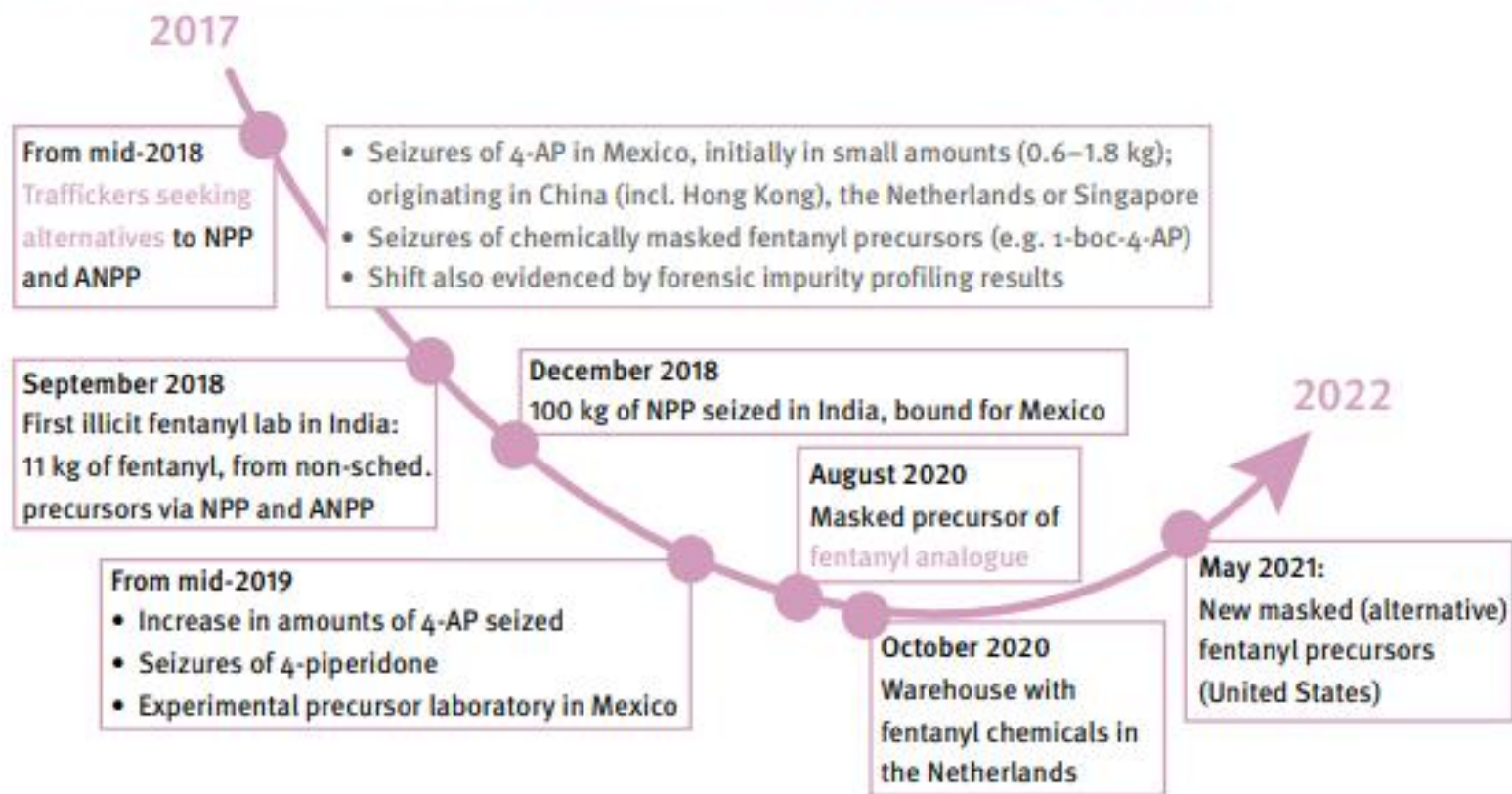
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined.

Source: UNODC Drugs Monitoring Platform.

Note: Member States have reported higher quantities of tramadol seized than is suggested by the map. On the basis of recent annual report questionnaire submissions, there appears to be a route for tramadol from countries in the Sahel region to North Africa and the Middle East.

Evolution of fentanyl precursors

Figure 19. Schematic overview of the evolution of fentanyl precursors, 2017–2022



Maritime routes and illicit trafficking of precursor chemicals for the clandestine manufacture of fentanyl

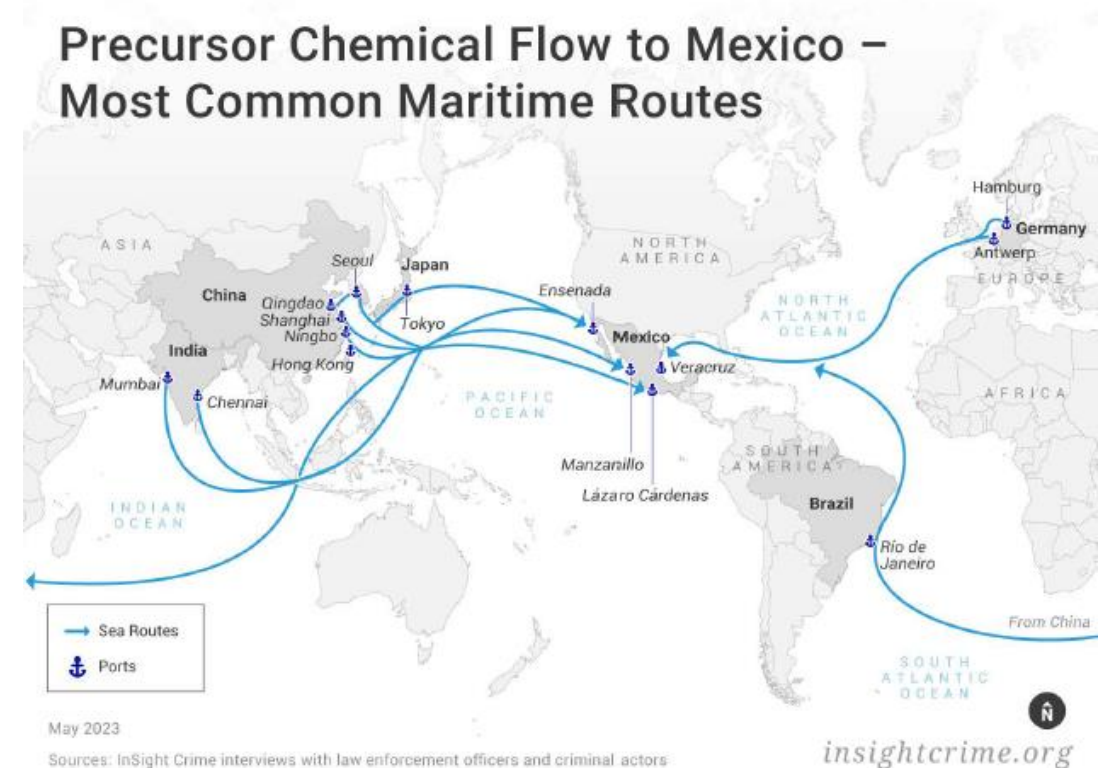
Main maritime routes depart from China (Shanghái, Ningbo and Qingdao) and connect with transit zones in Hong Kong, Japan and South Korea before heading to Mexico. Shipments from India depart from the ports of Chennai and Mumbai.

Chemical products are transported in cargo ships or commercial aircrafts, using camouflage methods to avoid detection.

Points of entry in Mexico are the ports of the Pacific.

Mislabeled and falsified.

Personnel lacks knowledge on chemical products. Fishing vessels and speedboats to withdraw the precursors from container ships before touching land.



Global cocaine market



The global **cocaine** market is expanding both on the **demand** and **supply** sides

- Coca crops expanded **35%** from 2020 to 2021
- Improvements in the **manufacture process** to cocaine hydrochloride
- **22 million** people are estimated to have consumed cocaine in 2022

The markets of **Central and Western Europe** and **Oceania** continue to grow, and along with the Americas, constitute the main cocaine consumption markets.

A record of 2,026 tons were seized in 2021. Seizures that took place closer to the production sites, as well as the total amounts siezed, are now **three times larger** in South America than North America.

Cocaine trafficking takes place mostly by sea and along more **geographically varied routes**: almost 89% of the cocaine seized is linked to maritime trafficking.

Emerging markets: New routes and trends

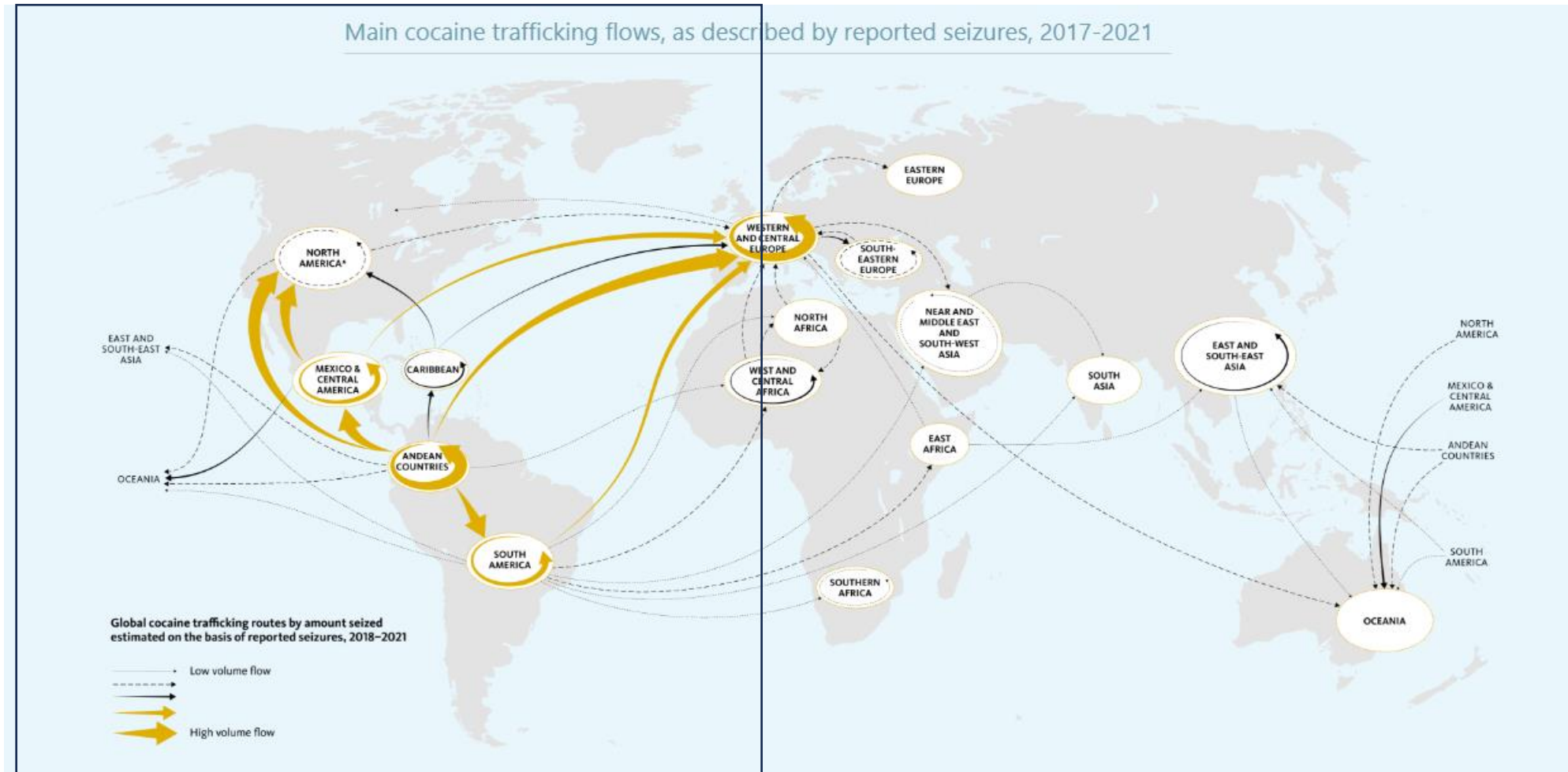


Emerging markets are consolidating in **Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa**, adding to the high prevalence levels in Latin America.

Africa is playing an increasingly predominant role in the **global supply**, leading to new nodes and routes for cocaine trafficking

The **Northern Sea ports**, such as Antwerp, Rotterdam and Hamburg are the main **entry points**

Main cocaine trafficking flows



Multimodal transportation of cocaine

Cocaine trafficking routes from South America to North America, 2021



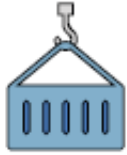
To reach a foreign consumption market from its place of production, a shipment of cocaine is transported in a multimodal manner, through different storage points, and involving various criminal actors.

Routes change in response to interdiction efforts and capacities, as well as external factors.

Principle of less resistance.

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Sources: UNODC CRIMJUST Annual Meeting of Strategic Analysts, Girardot, Colombia, November 2021; US Drug Enforcement Administration, 2020 National Drug Threat Assessment, Washington D.C.; National Drug Intelligence Center, 2021; El Heraldo, "Las seis rutas que usa el narcotráfico en su paso por Honduras", 21 February 2022.

Containers



Camouflage
Rip on/Rip off method,
“Drop off”, “Three
seals”, “switch”, “Trojan
Horse”.
Screen companies to
emulate licit import and
export activities
False documentation

Sailboats



Technological
advancements in sailing
allowed sailboats to
diversify their exit
points in the Atlantic
coast, from which they
deliver cocaine to
Europe or Africa

Fishing vessels



“Motherships” from which
smaller vessels involve in
drug trafficking.
The provide speedboats
with gasoline and
provisions.
Smaller fishing boats
transport smaller amounts
of drugs

Speedboats (“go-fast”)



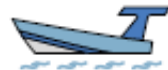
Are used for short-
distance transportation.
The maritime long-
distance routes are used
to traffic 500 kg or more,
with speedboats or semi-
submersible vessels

Freight ships



Tugboats, general cargo and
bulk cargo vessels

(Semi)submersible and water drones



State-of-the art vessels built especially
for drug trafficking. Unmanned
submarines programmed to follow a
predefined route.

Parasite



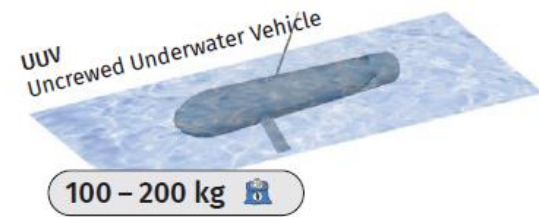
Method through which the cocaine
is adhered to the vessel from the
outside, below the waterline.

Semi-submersible vessels and water drones

(Semi)-Submersibles and their capacities to carry drugs



Water drones and their capacities to carry drugs



Sources:

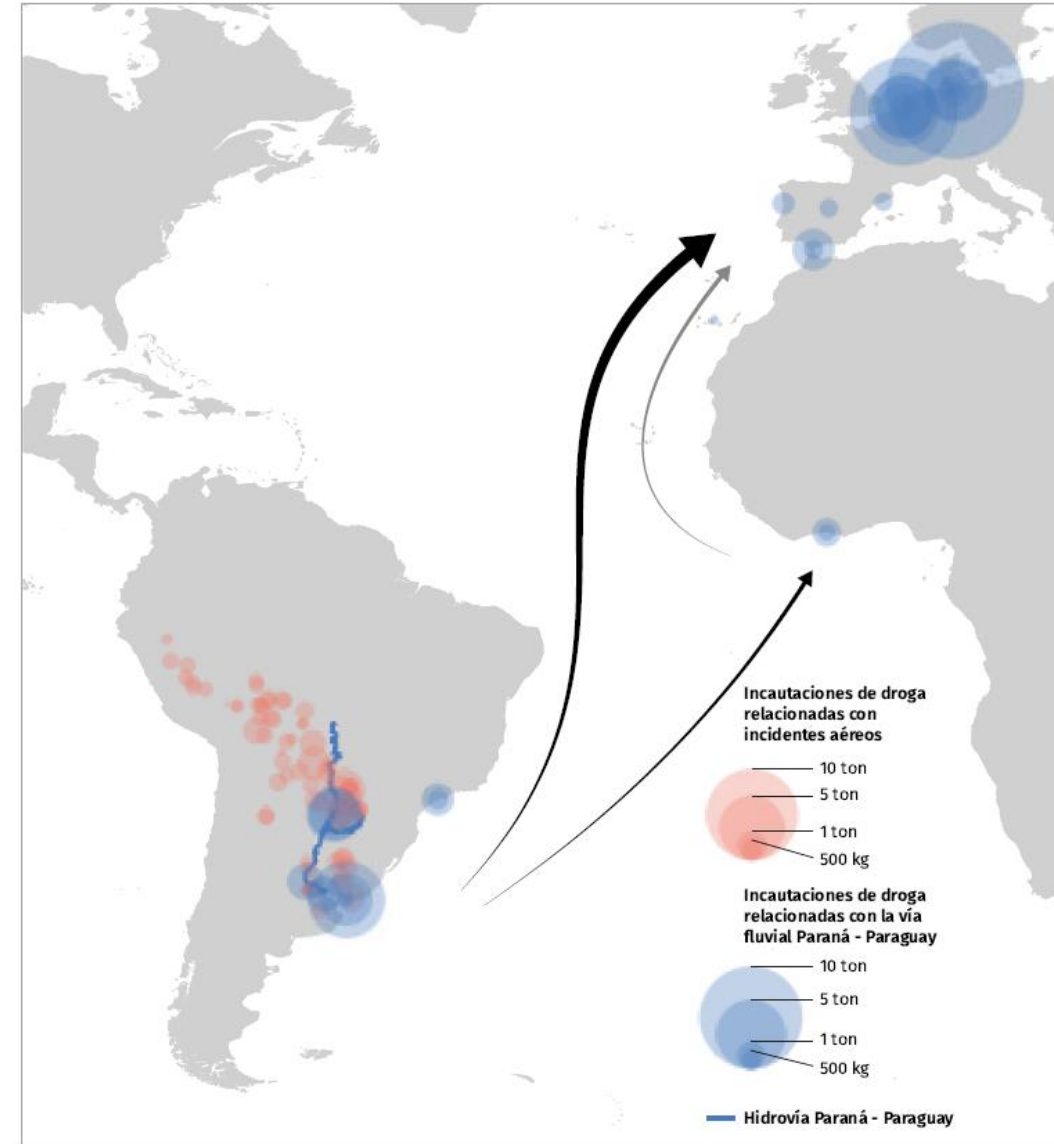
CMCON, 'Modalidades del Narcotráfico Marítimo 2022' (Centro Internacional de Investigación y Análisis Contra el Narcotráfico Marítimo, Armada de Colombia, 2022).
Scott Savitz, 'Opportunities for the Brazilian Navy to Employ Additional Unmanned Systems', Perspective (RAND Corporation, August 2021).
Gonzalo Araluce, 'Estos son los "drones submarinos" intervenidos por la Policía para traer droga de Marruecos', Vozpopuli, 4 July 2022.

New routes, more affected countries

Cocaine from Peru is being increasingly transported through the Southern Cone route, through Bolivia, Paraguay, and the Paraná-Paraguay waterway.

Criminal organizations use aircrafts to cross the border and then riverine routes all the way to the Atlantic.

Seizures linked to the Parana-Paraguay riverine route, or the River Plate estuary, and incidents related to aircrafts in the Southern Cone Route. 2017-September 2022.



Drug trafficking routes in the Amazon Basin

Predominant riverine driving: Although drugs and other illegal products are transported by road and air, rivers are the main transportation route in the region. Extensive network of rivers in the Amazon Basin: more than 1,100 rivers in the region.

Difficulty of detect: Illegal products often go undetected due to the high volume of commercial traffic on rivers.

Poor regulation and supervision: Regulation and supervision of cargo ships and containers in the region is poor, in both public and private ports.

Trafficking routes in Brazil: Drugs can be transported through several Brazilian states, such as Acre, Amazonas, Rondônia, Roraima and Mato Grosso, before leaving through the northeastern and southeastern states on the Atlantic coast towards Africa, Europe and other destinations.

Riverine Routes in the Amazon Basin

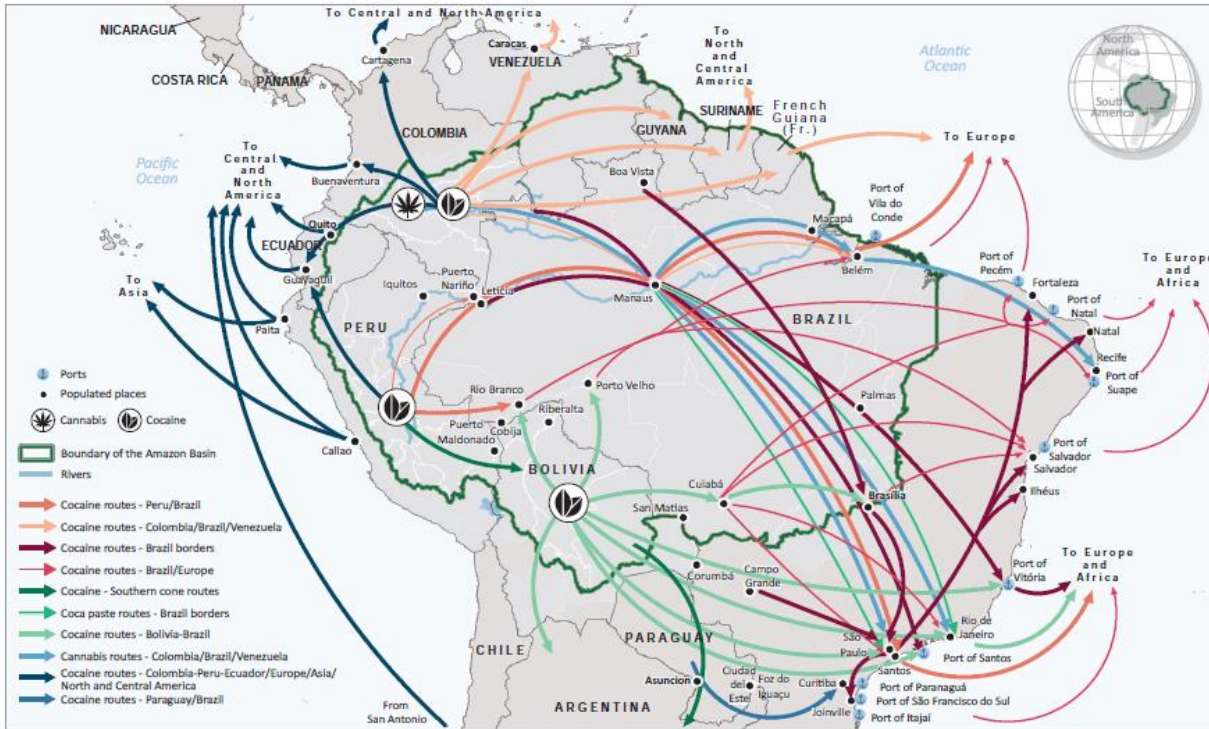
Brazil has approximately **60,000 kilometers of inland waterways**, but only about 13,000 kilometers are used regularly, and **very few of them are subject to regular air or land monitoring**, allowing illegal products to be hidden and easily transported between countries and headed to global markets.

Populations largely depend on rivers for all types of transportation and commerce, therefore, **seasonality influences drug trafficking and other illegal activities in the Amazon Basin.**

Sometimes during dry seasons, traffickers and smugglers may delay transporting their cargo, **keeping it in warehouses in neighboring countries** until water levels rise again.

Illicit Drug trafficking Routes in the Amazon Basin

MAP 7 Selected drug trafficking routes in the Amazon Basin



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Source: Internal administrative boundaries of Brazil: Geoportal Provita, 2023. Internal administrative boundaries of Colombia: the National Geostatistical Framework of the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE, 2021). Internal administrative boundaries of Peru: the National Geographic Institute, 2021. Internal administrative boundaries of Bolivia: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 2023. Boundary of the Amazon Basin: the Amazon Network of Georeferenced Socioenvironmental Information (RAISG, 2020) UNODC elaboration based on several sources, including previous editions of *World Drug Report*, open sources, media reports, seizure data, interviews and multiple international and national publications.

MAP 8 Amazon Basin infrastructure



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Source: Agustin Codazzi Geographic Institute (IGAC) and the National Geostatistical Framework of the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE, 2021); Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) and Geoportal Provita, 2023; OpenStreetMap and the National Geographic Institute, 2021 and Unique Digital Platform of the Peruvian State, 2023; Geographic Server: Servidor Geográfico, GeoBolivia and United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 2023; The Amazon Network of Georeferenced Socioenvironmental Information (RAISG, 2020).

Scope of Illicit Drug trafficking from the Amazon Basin

Routes through **Brazil** reached 65 countries between 2010 and 2022: Italy, Uruguay, Hong Kong (China), Portugal, Belgium, South Africa and Lebanon. 44% went to Western or Eastern Europe, and 23% went to Asia or Africa.

Cocaine transported through **Colombian** routes was destined to at least 64 countries. Ecuador, Venezuela, Panama, Italy, Belgium, El Salvador, Spain, Mexico and the United States. 52% went to the Americas, and 35% to Europe.

Cocaine routes from **Peru** had at least 51 countries as destination: Chile, Ecuador, Uruguay, Montenegro, Mexico, Panama and Switzerland. 47% to the Americas and 35% to Europe.

Cocaine routes from **Bolivia** were destined for 31 countries: Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, Panama, Argentina, Italy and Lebanon. 60% to the Americas, 20% to Europe and 11% to Asia.

Cannabis trafficking routes from Colombia are mainly destined for Venezuela, Ecuador and Panama, and virtually all were destined for markets in the Americas. Those from Bolivia mostly go to neighboring countries. In the case of Brazil, destination Uruguay or, to a lesser extent, Paraguay.

Seizures of chemical precursors in the region

Several LAC countries reported **seizures of chemical substances and precursors** used in the production of cocaine and drugs of synthetic origin.

Some of the seizures took place in **clandestine laboratories** especially built to manufacture cocaine or other chemical substances or precursors.

In recent years, several **Central American** countries have reported significant seizures of precursors used to manufacture synthetic drugs.



Control, identification and safe handling of drugs and chemical substances



Management of temporary warehouses, risk and inventories

Infrastructure analysis: **Matrix for evaluating the objective danger level** of the warehouse/warehouse

Improvement in **inventory classification and management.**

Training for the **identification and safe handling** of chemical substances and chemical precursors.



Post-seizure management and final disposal



10
Final disposal
exercises

+462
Tons of cocaine in
Ecuador

+150
Tons of precursors in
Ecuador, Guatemala
and Honduras



STAND
Solutions, Training & Advice for Narcotics Disposal



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contra la Droga y el Delito

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A decorative horizontal bar with four segments of varying lengths and colors: white, light blue, medium blue, and dark blue.

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STAND Project

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RECURSOS EN LÍNEA

