

RCMP Criminal Intelligence

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REPORT ON THE ILLICIT  
DRUG SITUATION  
IN CANADA — 2009

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## REPORT ON THE ILLICIT DRUG SITUATION IN CANADA — 2009

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This report provides an overview of illicit drug activity including trafficking, smuggling, and production in Canada for 2009.

For the past five years, the Canadian illicit drug market has remained relatively stable. Cannabis continued to be the most commonly used illicit substance in Canada, with domestically-produced marihuana providing a source of considerable profit for Canadian-based organized crime. Next to marihuana, cocaine generated the most revenue of the illicit drug commodities.

Canada remained one of the primary global source countries for MDMA and methamphetamine. Organized crime groups not only produced synthetic drugs for domestic markets, but also provided significant quantities for international markets such as the United States. In the fall of 2009, the Canadian government launched the Synthetic Drug Initiative, a multi-agency, RCMP-led program “designed to eliminate the production and distribution of synthetic drugs in Canada, and reduce the overall influence of organized crime on drug trafficking in Canada.”<sup>i</sup>

While it is common for drug trafficking organizations to use alternative routes to avoid detection by law enforcement, some transit countries used to smuggle illicit drugs to Canada remained the same in 2009 for a number of commodities. For example, the United States remained the predominant transit country for cocaine shipments, while African countries remained key transit points for hashish products destined for Canada.

In the Canadian Alcohol and Drug Use Monitoring Survey (CADUMS) for 2009, a study which measures drug use in Canada, Health Canada noted a decrease over the past five years in the reported rate of use for illicit drugs overall, which was primarily attributed to the decreased rate of past-year cannabis use. Statistics Canada<sup>ii</sup> also reported that drug offences declined by six percent in 2009, primarily due to a 21 percent drop in cocaine offences. According to this report, cannabis offences, comprising approximately two-thirds of all drug crimes, remained relatively stable in 2009. However, in contrast to these reported decreases, seizure data suggested that smuggling and production have remained consistent with or have increased slightly as compared to previous years.

While there have been significant successes in 2009, profits derived from the Canadian illicit drug market continue to drive most organized crime in the country. Organized crime groups will continue to change and adapt production and distribution methods in response to law enforcement pressures and activities, and to meet domestic and international demand to ensure a continued supply of illegal drugs.

### **Methodology**

The Report on the Illicit Drug Situation in Canada is an overview of illicit drug production, trafficking, and smuggling activity in Canada between January and December 2009. While the report is prepared by the RCMP, a number of agencies support the collection of information. Sources of information include:

- RCMP Databases and operational information:
  - Seizure records.
  - Investigative reports.
- Other government agencies' information:
  - Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) Quarterly reports.
  - Health Canada Annual Reporting Questionnaire information.
  - Statistics Canada reports.
- Information provided by domestic and international law enforcement contacts.
- Domestic and international joint operations with partner government agencies.
- International documents (such as the annual United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) World Drug Report).
- Open source information (such as media reports).

### **Analysis**

Quantitative data is the primary dataset used to assess the illicit drug situation in a country, as it provides an easily measureable benchmark for a comparative analysis from year to year. However, the data limitations (detailed below), common to most police agencies, require that the authors of this report look beyond the raw data. The nature of intelligence analysis requires analysts to draw upon their own observations of trends or related domestic and international events in order to form judgments and provide the contextual analysis which adds value and meaning to the numbers. Where data is irreconcilable with the operational picture that emerges from field reports, intelligence analysts must examine these gaps and inconsistencies and assess whether the data is flawed, whether information required to complete the picture is missing, or whether they will have to use their experience and knowledge to provide the full context.

### **Data Limitations**

Despite data limitations, the RCMP's annual illicit drug report strives to provide the most complete national picture that is currently available. The Criminal Intelligence Program continues to work with its partners to develop new collection methods that will improve the quality and reliability of drug seizure data in Canada. The 2009 seizure data reported in this document were approved by the RCMP and Health Canada as part of Canada's annual submission to the UNODC.

In terms of specific types of data limitations experienced by the RCMP and its partner agencies, the following factors must be considered when examining the data sets available for this report:

**Ongoing Court Cases and Investigations:** Currently the data regarding the amount of drugs and the number of drug seizures in Canada is collected by Health Canada from all police forces across Canada. This information is entered into the Controlled Drugs and Substances database maintained by Health Canada. However, if a case is in the court system, or the seizure is a part of an ongoing investigation, this information may not be conveyed to Health Canada until the termination of the case or investigation, both of which can continue beyond the calendar year in which the drugs were seized. As a result, such seizure information will not be entered into the database and captured for that year.

**Quality Control:** With the increasing reporting requirements for police in the field and the available amount of resources needed to meet these requirements, data is occasionally entered into the systems incorrectly or is missing altogether. Steps are being taken to educate and inform front line RCMP officers of the importance of timely, accurate reporting.

**Different Operational Environments:** As a result of differences in roles, mandates, and environments, police forces and government agencies count and measure seizures in different ways. Canadian police forces (municipal, provincial, federal) use a variety of different methods to collect data. This lack of standardization across agencies in reporting and collection leads to differences in the type of data and level of detail available, as well as the manner in which it is collected.

**Technological Limitations:** Numerous and complex data collection systems are used within the RCMP to collect drug seizure information; unfortunately, some of these systems are not interconnected, nor do they process the data in a uniform manner.

Without a single, comprehensive, cross-jurisdictional database for the collection of drug seizure information from all law enforcement agencies in Canada, these data limitations will continue to hamper the ability of the RCMP to accurately describe and report on the national drug situation in Canada.

### ***Seizure data for the 2009 report***

The seizure data provided in this report is based on information collected from a variety of sources, including RCMP databases, CBSA information, and Health Canada's Controlled Drugs and Substances Database (CDSD). The CDSD contains information on drug seizures effected by all levels of policing nation-wide. In some cases, there will be a significant time lag between the actual drug seizure date and the time this information is entered into the Health Canada database due to ongoing investigations and court procedures. Therefore, seizures may not be reported in the CDSD for the year in which they actually occur. Given these challenges, the RCMP worked closely with Health Canada to reach a consensus and determine the most accurate seizure statistics possible based on the information contained in their respective databases. The seizure statistics reported in this document are the same as those provided in the Canadian submission to the UNODC Annual Reports Questionnaire on the illicit supply of drugs.

### Cannabis



Derivatives of cannabis include marihuana (cannabis herb), hashish (cannabis resin), and hashish oil, which are created using various parts of the cannabis plant. In Canada, marihuana is the most common cannabis derivative that is produced and shipped abroad.

- **Cannabis herb – marihuana** generally refers to the dried flowers and leaves of the cannabis plant, also known as *Cannabis sativa-L*. The drug is smoked or ingested to experience its euphoric and hallucinogenic effects.
- **Cannabis resin – hashish (hash)** is a resin or paste produced from the flowers of the cannabis plant. Hashish can be smoked or ingested to experience the psychoactive effects of the drug.
- **Cannabis oil – hashish oil (hash oil)** is a liquid made from combining hashish or the marihuana “bud” with solvents such as isopropyl alcohol. Hash and hash oil contain higher levels of the tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) than marihuana.

### Cocaine



Cultivated in the Andes Mountains in South America, coca bush leaves are processed in clandestine laboratories into a white powder known as cocaine hydrochloride (HCl). Cocaine HCl, a stimulant, is often adulterated with various cutting agents including caffeine or cornstarch, or mixed with other drugs, in order to increase the drug’s volume, thereby increasing profits. Crack is made by dissolving cocaine powder (or cocaine HCl) and boiling it in a mixture of water and ammonia or baking soda. Once cooled into a solid substance, it forms into small pieces often referred to as “rocks”.

## Opiates



- **Heroin** is a semi-synthetic opiate drug made from morphine, which is a natural substance extracted from the seed pod of the *Papaver somniferum*, more commonly known as the opium poppy.



- **Opium** is collected from the milky resin released from incisions made into the unripened seed pod of the opium poppy. As the resin is exposed to air, it hardens and turns into a dark gum-like substance. Sold on the street as a powder or dark brown solid, opium can be smoked, ingested, or injected.



- **Dode** is made by grinding the dried seed pods of the opium poppy into a fine powder. It is dissolved in hot water, and produces a quick high followed by a sense of well being.

## Khat



**Khat** is a stimulant consisting of the leaves and shoots of the *Catha edulis* Forsk, a shrub/tree native to Eastern Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. The leaves contain amphetamine-like stimulants, namely cathinone and cathine, which are controlled substances in Canada. Cathinone levels are highest in freshly cut plants; dried or dehydrated khat contains cathine. Although it is most commonly ingested by chewing fresh leaves, it can also be brewed in tea or used as a food additive. The consumption of fresh khat induces a state of euphoria and elation, as well as a sense of increased alertness. Khat is traditionally consumed as part of celebrations and social gatherings.

## Synthetic Drugs



- **MDMA (Ecstasy)** is a psychoactive drug of the phenethylamine family, producing both hallucinogenic and stimulant (amphetamine-type) effects. Initial adoption by the rave subculture led to MDMA's widespread popularity as a club/party drug because of its ability to produce strong feelings of comfort, empathy, and self-awareness. MDMA is available in both tablet and powder forms, however the many different coloured logo tablets known as Ecstasy predominate in the illicit retail market.



- **Methamphetamine (meth)** is a powerful, addictive central nervous system stimulant, which can be injected, smoked, snorted, or ingested. "Crystal meth" is also methamphetamine, and is simply a different form (rock-like crystals) which is typically smoked. This form of meth is usually high in purity. Within the last decade in Canada, meth has become available in tablet form, either as an ingredient in logo pills held out to be Ecstasy, or marketed as meth.

- **Other Synthetic Drugs** refer to the many different controlled and unregulated substances — other than MDMA or meth — that circulate in the illicit drug market. Traditional and more recently introduced controlled drugs, diverted pharmaceuticals, and non-controlled substances (as determined by the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* (CDSA)) comprise an important segment of the illicit synthetic drug trade in Canada.



- **Precursor and Essential Chemicals** are, (for the purposes of this report), substances used in the production of synthetic drugs. The regulated chemicals (those controlled under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*) most in demand in Canada are generally those used to make MDMA, meth, and GHB. The term “precursor and essential chemicals” also includes substances which can be produced or procured without any licenses, permits, or legal obligations. Many of these substances, as well as some of the controlled substances, are readily available through hardware stores and chemical companies.

### **Addiction-based laboratories**

These laboratories (labs) are intended to produce drugs for personal consumption. This type of lab is capable of producing gram quantities.

### **Adulterant**

Often synonymous with the term “cutting agent,” an adulterant is a substance that is used to reduce the amount of the illicit drug in the product that is being marketed, thereby increasing the potential profits to be made on the original quantity of the illicit drug. Such substances may be inert or pharmacologically active (e.g. cornstarch versus lidocaine).

### **Boxed Laboratory**

A clandestine laboratory (clan lab) that has been dismantled and the equipment/chemicals stored, possibly for future use, is referred to as a boxed lab. The clan lab, in this state, still poses risks as the chemicals and equipment may not have been stored properly or safely.

### **BZP**

1-benzylpiperazine (BZP) is a piperazine analog with euphoric and stimulant properties that are believed to be similar to MDMA.

### **Cold method/reductive amination**

This is a method of producing MDMA (Ecstasy). Reducing agents, such as sodium borohydride, are reacted with MDP2P (a regulated precursor) and methylamine (an unregulated chemical) to produce MDMA. The process is called the “cold method” as the combination of chemicals is exothermic, requiring the vessel to be externally cooled in order to control the temperature.

### **Controlled Drugs and Substances Act**

The *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* (CDSA) is the governing legislation for controlled drugs and substances in Canada. The penalties and offences associated with a specific controlled drug or chemical will depend upon which schedule the substance is listed within.

### **Crack**

Crack is cocaine base derived from cocaine hydrochloride.

### **Cutting agent (see “Adulterant”)**

### **Economic-based laboratories**

These types of labs exist solely for producing synthetic drugs for sale, to meet domestic and/or international demand. The labs can be sophisticated and complex in terms of their operations and equipment used. The majority of these labs are operated by organized crime groups.

### ***Essential chemical***

An essential chemical is any chemical that constitutes an essential part of the synthesis process; an example of these would be chemicals such as methylamine and sodium borohydride, in the production of methamphetamine (meth) and MDMA.

### ***Forensic Profiling***

Forensic profiling involves several analyses that are designed to produce a detailed picture (profile) of a drug sample. The resulting chemical profiles, also known as “signatures” or “impurity profiles,” result in the identification and quantification of major components present in the sample. A tactical application of impurity profiling is the establishment of distribution and/or trafficking links between multiple seized samples that have been obtained at different locations, or in the possession of different individuals. Forensic profiling also has strategic applications, such as the identification of synthesis methods utilized in clandestine laboratories (clan labs); the identification of chemicals, reagents and/or solvents employed by those clan labs; the identification of drugs derived from botanical sources; and, to provide a scientifically defensible determination of the geographical origin of the sample. The majority of drugs seized in Canada are not subject to advanced forensic profiling due to its prohibitive cost.

### ***GBL***

GBL, a chemical also known as gamma-butyrolactone, is a precursor chemical used to make gamma hydroxybutyrate (GHB).

### ***GHB***

Also known as gamma hydroxybutyrate, GHB is a Schedule III drug and is synthesized using gamma-butyrolactone (GBL) and sodium hydroxide. GHB became a popular party drug in the 1990s due to its “downer” and aphrodisiac effects.

### ***Ketamine***

This drug, an analogue of phencyclidine (PCP), emerged on the North American illicit synthetic drug market in the aftermath of the rave explosion, and is frequently used within the club scene due to its hallucinogenic properties.

### ***LSD***

Lysergic acid diethylamide is a synthetic hallucinogenic drug derived from lysergic acid. LSD is an extremely potent drug, and is usually seen in the form of blotter paper, and occasionally diluted in various liquids. It is a colourless and odourless crystal.

### ***MDA***

N-methyl-3,4-methylenedioxyamphetamine is a Schedule III synthetic hallucinogen with amphetamine-like properties. MDA has similar properties to MDMA and can be combined with MDMA to be marketed as Ecstasy. MDA is less common in Canada than MDMA.

### **MDMA**

N-methyl-3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine is a Schedule III synthetic hallucinogen with amphetamine-like properties. It is usually sold on the street in tablet or capsule form. Known on the street by such names as Ecstasy and “E”, it is the drug of choice among those who attend rave dances.

### **MDP2P**

3,4-methylenedioxy phenyl-2-propanone is a Class A precursor (found in Schedule VI of the CDSA) commonly used in the production of MDMA.

### **Methamphetamine**

Methamphetamine is a Schedule I synthetic stimulant with amphetamine-like properties. It is sold in powder and, more recently, tablet form. Meth has recently become popular with the club/party scene and has become more available to mainstream society.

### **Methylamine**

This chemical is used with MDP2P to synthesize MDMA, or with P2P to synthesize meth. This chemical is not regulated under the Canadian Precursor Control Regulations and as such is not illegal to possess.

### **PCP**

Phencyclidine is a Schedule I drug. PCP is a very strong dissociative hallucinogen which inhibits pain receptors during periods of intoxication. It comes in both powder and liquid forms, but is typically applied to leafy material such as mint, parsley, tobacco, or marijuana and smoked.

### **Poly-drug**

This means more than one type of drug. In this report, this term is used in three contexts:

- Poly-drug laboratories: clandestine laboratories producing more than one type of drug.
- Poly-drug shipments: illegal drug shipments that combine more than one type of drug.
- Poly-drug tablets: tablets, often marketed as Ecstasy, which are composed of a variety of illicit drugs.

### **Precursor chemicals**

This refers to a group of various chemicals that are used in the production of semi-synthetic (heroin) and synthetic drugs (MDMA and meth).

### ***Precursor Control Regulations***

The Precursor Control Regulations (PCRs) are used to regulate access and availability of certain chemicals that are required for drug production. The PCRs require a person who produces, packages, sells, or provides a Class A precursor (contained in Schedule VI, part 1 of the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*) to hold a licence issued by Health Canada. The regulations govern the manner in which precursors can be sold, produced, destroyed, and transported by licensees and the requirements for obtaining a licence. The production of Class B precursors is also regulated by the PCRs, and producers are subject to a registration process.

### ***Red Phosphorous (Red P) method***

This well-known synthesis process for producing meth reduces ephedrine or pseudoephedrine by the addition and reaction with red phosphorous and hydriodic acid. This method was first noted in California and became commonplace in meth labs run by Mexican organized crime networks. It was subsequently adopted by traffickers in British Columbia and became popular with producers across the country.

### ***Regulated chemical***

This is a precursor or essential chemical that is regulated by the PCRs, Schedule VI, CDSA.

### ***Safrole***

This precursor chemical for MDMA is extracted from sassafras plants or can be synthesized from chemicals.

### ***Shotgunning***

Shotgunning refers to the process used by an exporter, normally located overseas, to send multiple mail and/or courier packages containing small quantities of an illicit drug to numerous addresses in Canada, thereby reducing the risk of having an entire shipment seized at once.

### ***Source country***

The country in which an illicit or regulated substance is cultivated or produced is referred to as a source country.

### ***Tablet extraction***

This is a process used to extract ephedrine from over-the-counter medicines such as cold tablets. The extraction process separates the ephedrine from binders (chemicals) that hold the tablet together. The extraction is usually performed with large volumes of solvents.

### ***TFMPP***

1-[3-trifluoromethylphenyl] (TFMP) is a piperazine which produces hallucinogenic effects.

### ***Transit country***

The country through which illicit drugs or precursor/essential chemicals are shipped before arriving at their destined country is referred to as a transit country.

### ***Unregulated chemical***

This term refers to a precursor or essential chemical that is not currently regulated by the Precursor Control Regulations.

### ***Wacker Oxidation Method***

Using a catalyst such as palladium, the Wacker method can be used to oxidize safrole into MDP2P. Once the MDP2P is synthesized, any method of reductive amination (see page 7) can be used.

## **Transportation of Illicit Substances**

### ***Cross-Border***

For the purposes of this report, cross-border refers exclusively to the transport of illicit drugs and regulated and unregulated precursor/essential chemicals across the border between Canada and the United States.

### ***Mode***

For the purposes of this report, four categories were used to classify the mode of transportation for illicit drugs and regulated/unregulated chemicals: air, land, marine, and postal.

### ***Method of Transportation***

Each mode has associated methods of transportation:

- **Air:** Air cargo, commercial passenger, private aircraft.
- **Land:** Commercial vehicle, private vehicle, and on foot.
- **Marine:** Marine vessel (e.g., commercial boat), mothership,<sup>1</sup> and private watercraft.
- **Postal:** Mail and courier.

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<sup>1</sup> The term mothership describes a sea vessel used for the sole purpose of transporting drugs.

## **Terms for the Movement of Illicit Drugs and Unregulated/Regulated Chemicals**

This report discerns between importation/exportation, smuggling, and trafficking and defines them (for the purposes of this report) accordingly:

**Importation/exportation** for the purposes of this report refers to illicit substances that are brought into or shipped from Canada, illegally or hidden within legitimate shipments.

**Smuggling** refers to substances that are illegitimately received into or shipped from Canada.

**Trafficking** means the illegal movement and sale of drugs and regulated/unregulated chemicals within Canada, often across provincial lines.

**Diversion** is the term used when criminals or criminal organizations move regulated chemicals from legitimate companies that have imported or produced the substance, for criminal purposes (black market resale or use in clandestine laboratories).

### ***Port of Entry***

A Port of Entry (POE) is the point where people and imported goods are legally admitted to a country — this includes land borders, airports, as well as marine ports. For the purposes of this report, the usage of the term POE generally refers to land border crossings between Canada and the United States; marine ports or airports will be identified by name.

## Introduction

This section is based on the results of the 2009 Health Canada-sponsored Canadian Alcohol and Drug Use Monitoring Survey (CADUMS),<sup>2</sup> which provides national and provincial estimates of alcohol and illicit drug use among Canadians aged 15 years and older.<sup>3</sup> This section will provide information on the prevalence of drug use in Canada, and is included in this report in order to provide context to the overall picture presented by the Report on the Illicit Drug Situation in Canada — 2009. Health Canada and the RCMP have significantly different mandates in relation to illicit drugs in Canada. As such, the commodities, definitions, and trends presented in this section may not correspond directly with those presented in the main section of this report.

## About the Survey

The 2009 CADUMS survey was conducted through randomly-dialled telephone interviews with 13,082 respondents across all 10 provinces.<sup>4</sup> The results obtained from this sample of respondents were used to provide an estimate of illicit drug use among almost 26 million Canadians.<sup>5</sup> The CADUMS is an ongoing survey, which allows for comparisons to previous years and examinations of long-term trends. Not only can the 2009 results be directly compared with the 2008 CADUMS results (based on the same/similar questions), but they can also be compared to the estimates from the 2004 Canadian Addiction Survey (CAS) for the purposes of identifying any trends in substance use and abuse which have occurred over the past five years.

## National Overview

Cannabis remained the most commonly used illicit substance in Canada followed by cocaine/crack, Ecstasy, hallucinogens, speed, and methamphetamine in 2009. Over the past five years, there has been a decrease in the reported prevalence of past year illicit drug use,<sup>6</sup> which the CADUMS has attributed primarily to the decreased prevalence of past-year cannabis use.

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2 For the full CADUMS report, please consult the Health Canada website: [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hc-ps/drugs-drogues/stat/\\_2009/summary-sommaire-eng.php#tbls](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hc-ps/drugs-drogues/stat/_2009/summary-sommaire-eng.php#tbls)

3 For the purposes of the CADUMS survey only, youth is defined as 15-24 years old, whereas adult is defined as 25 years or older.

4 According to Health Canada, the survey includes persons aged 15 and older, living in private dwellings with a telephone. It excludes people living in the three northern territories, on Indian reserves/Crown lands, in institutions, or military establishments, and those with cell phones only.

5 The 2009 survey represents 25,957,435 Canadian residents, aged 15 years and older.

6 The prevalence of past-year illicit drug use (any 6 drugs including cannabis, cocaine/crack, speed, Ecstasy, hallucinogens, and heroin) decreased from 14.5 percent in 2004 to 11 percent in 2009. The decline between 2004 and 2009 is statistically significant.

**Table 1:7 Prevalence of Past Year Illicit Drug Use in 2004, 2008, and 2009**

Drug Type	CAS 2004	CADUMS 2008	CADUMS 2009
Cannabis	14.1	11.4*	10.6 **
Cocaine/Crack cocaine	1.9	1.6	1.2
Amphetamine (speed)	0.8	1.1	0.4
Hallucinogens <sup>8</sup> (excluding salvia)	0.7	n/a	0.7
Hallucinogens (including salvia)	n/a	2.1	0.9***
MDMA (Ecstasy)	1.1	1.4	0.9
Any 6 drugs (hallucinogens excl. salvia)	14.5	n/a	11.0**
Any 5 drugs (hallucinogens excl. salvia)	3.0	n/a	2.0
Any 6 drugs (hallucinogens incl. salvia)	n/a	12.1	11.1
Any 5 drugs (hallucinogens incl. salvia)	n/a	3.9	2.1***

\* Indicates that the difference between 2008 and 2004 is statistically significant.

\*\* Indicates that the difference between 2009 and 2004 is statistically significant.

\*\*\* Indicates that the difference between 2008 and 2009 is statistically significant.

n/a - Indicates that the results are not comparable across survey years.

Health Canada identified salvia<sup>9</sup> as an emerging substance of interest, and chose to examine it on its own in the 2009 CADUMS. In 2008, salvia had been included in the general hallucinogens category in the CADUMS survey, but was not included in the 2004 CAS. This substance is readily available in Canada, but is not regulated under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*.

### Past-year Illicit Drug Use by Demographics

As with previous surveys, the 2009 CADUMS survey showed marked differences between drug use by youths and adults. In 2009, there was a decrease in the prevalence of past-year use of cannabis across all respondent groups — males, females, youth, and adults — as compared to 2008, when the decrease was apparent only for males and adults. While the results of the 2009 survey indicated that overall cannabis use by youth was on the decline from previous years, it clearly demonstrated that the prevalence of use among youth (26.3%) remained higher than that of adults (7.6%).

Overall it appeared that the use of at least one of five illicit drugs (excluding cannabis) by youth was also on the decline, with a reported rate of 5.5 percent in 2009 as compared to 11.3 percent in 2004. Despite this, the use of at least one illicit drug (excluding cannabis) remained much higher among youth than adults, with 5.5 percent of youth reporting use in the past year, compared with 1.3 percent of adults.

7 Table 1 represents the results of the 2009 and 2008 CADUMS as well as the 2004 CAS on national prevalence of past-year illicit drug use among Canadians aged 15 years and older, across all ten provinces.

8 The list of substances under hallucinogens differs between all three years. In 2004, the list of hallucinogens made reference to only PCP and LSD. In 2008, the list was expanded to include PCP, LSD, salvia, or magic mushrooms. Furthermore, in 2009, salvia was examined on its own, separate from other hallucinogens. Therefore, the results cannot be directly compared across all years.

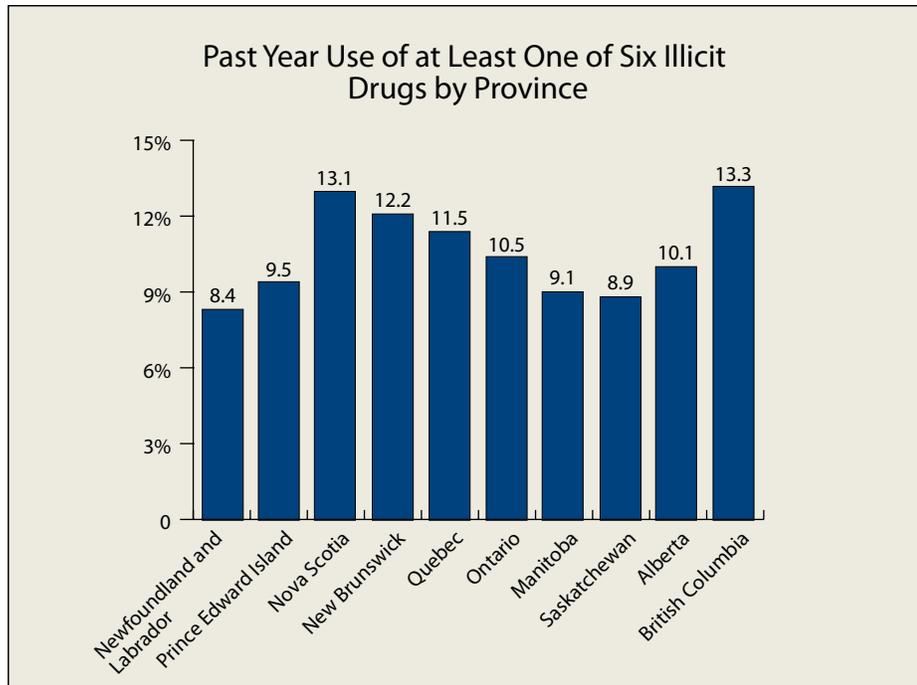
9 *Salvia Divinorum*, known by several names including Diviner's Sage and Magic Mint, is a plant with psychoactive properties which when smoked or chewed can trigger hallucinations which appear to be qualitatively different from other hallucinogens such as LSD.

## Past-year Illicit Drug Use by Province

Due to high sampling variability, the rate of past-year use of individual drug types could not be presented by province, with the exception of cannabis.<sup>10</sup> Provincially, the use of cannabis alone was highest in Nova Scotia (13.1%) and lowest in Saskatchewan (8.0%), although there was no significant difference across provinces in the prevalence of past-year cannabis use.

However, information concerning the prevalence of use of at least one illicit drug (including cannabis)<sup>11</sup> across provinces was available and is presented in the following chart:

**Chart 1**



## Limitations of Survey Data

The reported drug usage rates should be taken as conservative estimates of the actual usage rates, as several factors lead to the under-reporting of drug use in general population surveys. Drug users may be under-sampled and those who are sampled may not disclose their criminal behaviours. Approximately 34 percent of households comprised of people aged 18-34 years use cell phones exclusively, and therefore do not subscribe to land lines. Those households are excluded from general surveys that depend upon randomly-dialled numbers obtained from phone directories across the country. The survey sample was found to under-represent both the Canadian population which is single, and that which has less than a university education. High risk groups such as the homeless are also excluded from these surveys. While rates of under-reporting usage may be fairly constant across time, there is a risk that changing levels of stigma associated to specific drugs will influence self-reporting to unknown degrees.

<sup>10</sup> The high sampling variability was not in the 2009 data as a whole, but instead associated with estimates that were based on small sample sizes — such as drug use by province.

<sup>11</sup> See footnote 6 for list of the six illicit drugs.

## Marihuana

### **Key Findings**

- In 2009, domestically-produced marihuana continued to be the most seized illicit drug in Canada, in terms of both frequency and quantity.
- Marihuana was predominantly produced in British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec, though production in the Prairies and the Maritimes continued.
- A decrease in cross-border seizures of Canadian marihuana and law enforcement reporting continued to suggest that organized crime groups (OC groups) have moved their operations to the United States to avoid the risk of detection by enhanced law enforcement at the Canada-U.S. border.
- The Marihuana Medical Access Regulations (MMAR) are susceptible to exploitation by drug trafficking organizations.

Cannabis is the most widely produced, seized, and consumed drug worldwide.<sup>iii</sup> Cannabis remains the most commonly used illicit drug in Canada, although there has been a slight decline in the last several years.<sup>iv</sup> Despite the decrease in seizures at the Canada-U.S. border, marihuana smuggling continues to be one of the most lucrative activities for organized crime in Canada and will likely remain so for years to come.



### **Supply and Smuggling Patterns**

In 2009, Canadian law enforcement seized a total of 34,391 kilograms (kg) of marihuana and 1,845,734 marihuana plants. These figures, which have remained relatively unchanged from 2008 and coupled with steady street prices in 2009, indicated an apparently stable marihuana market. As in 2008, the majority of marihuana seized was domestically produced, yet the drug continued to be imported from Jamaica, the United States, the Netherlands, and Thailand.

Marihuana is cultivated in Canada in both indoor and outdoor grow operations. However, indoor production sites are more common due to the higher degree of control over the growing environment, resulting in larger yields, higher tetrahydrocannabinol<sup>12</sup> (THC) levels, and increased privacy to avoid law enforcement detection. There has been a continual increase in the level of sophistication of indoor marihuana cultivation, including more advanced growing techniques and equipment (e.g. LED lights, hydroponics).

<sup>12</sup> THC is the psychoactive substance in the cannabis plant. THC levels determine the potency — the higher the level the more potent the marihuana.

The amount of marihuana produced in Canada exceeded domestic demand. Reportedly, there were OC groups producing this drug specifically for export to foreign markets, the largest of which is the United States. According to the U.S. National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC), while seizures of Canadian marihuana have declined<sup>13</sup> at the Canada-U.S. border, Canada continued to be a source country for high-grade marihuana destined for U.S. illicit drug markets.<sup>v</sup> The reported decline was believed to be due, in part, to Canadian-based Asian OC groups using their expertise to establish cannabis cultivation sites within the United States, thereby avoiding the cost of transporting drugs across the border and the risk of detection.

Shipments of marihuana destined for Canada were smuggled through air cargo or passenger flights, and arrived primarily at Toronto Pearson International Airport. Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) reported the seizure of approximately 1.15 tonnes of marihuana in 2009, with 60 percent of the total originating from Jamaica. Jamaican marihuana was primarily supplying a small market in Ontario and Quebec.

While marihuana production continued to occur in all provinces, cultivation and production predominantly occurred in British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec. Indoor cultivation, in both urban and rural settings, continued throughout the Prairies; outdoor grow operations, on the other hand, were more common in the Maritimes. In 2009, large amounts of processed marihuana,<sup>14</sup> plants, and equipment were transported from British Columbia to Alberta. The presence of marihuana grow operations increased in small, rural communities in the Prairie provinces; the lower cost of real estate enabled these groups to operate more profitable criminal enterprises while avoiding police detection. In urban centres throughout the Prairies, large indoor commercial grow operations became more commonplace.

Interdictions reported by the Pipeline/Convoy Program<sup>15</sup> in 2009 continued to support the 2008 finding that marihuana is trafficked east from the main producing provinces. Private vehicles were used for inter-provincial transport, while commercial vehicles were used for larger cross-border shipments to the United States.

### **Trafficking Activity and Groups**

Cannabis products constitute the largest illicit drug market in the world.<sup>vi</sup> The popularity with the general public, profitability, and the relative ease of production and cultivation, makes it an attractive market for OC involvement.

Asian OC groups continued to dominate indoor production using technologically advanced growing methods<sup>16</sup> to increase marihuana production and potency; the marihuana trade remained their core activity. Proceeds generated by the production and trafficking of marihuana may enable OC groups to finance other criminal activities and operations, such as Canada to U.S. MDMA (Ecstasy) and cocaine trafficking. Organized crime groups are working together to form networks to expand their operations, and to facilitate the trafficking of illicit drugs.

13 The 2010 NDIC National Drug Threat Assessment reported a decrease in the amount of marihuana seized along the U.S.-Canada border from 10,447 kg in 2005 to 3,423 kg in 2009.

14 Processed marihuana refers to the plant which has been harvested and dried, and is ready for sale or consumption.

15 Pipeline/Convoy is an RCMP program to detect vehicles transporting contraband.

16 For example, by varying the amount and type of lamps used in indoor marihuana grow operations, growers can produce larger plants that will deliver high yields of dried marihuana.

The Marihuana Medical Access Regulations (MMAR), a government initiative established to provide a lawful source of medical marihuana to Canadians suffering from critical and chronic illnesses, is susceptible to exploitation by OC groups. Drug traffickers can use the Health Canada MMAR exceptions to conceal illegal grow operations, avoiding detection by law enforcement agencies while increasing their profits. The MMAR program has grown in size since its inception in 2001, and it is believed that this will continue. As of November 2009, 4,728 Canadians were issued authorizations to possess dried marihuana under this program.

### ***Major Seizures in Canada***

- In May, CBSA officers at Toronto Pearson International Airport seized 292 kg of marihuana from an inbound flight that originated in Thailand and transited through Amsterdam. The air cargo shipment was declared as ceramics and the marihuana was packaged in vacuum-sealed bags.
- In August, CBSA officers at Port Alfred, in Chicoutimi, Quebec seized a total of 300 kg of compressed marihuana. Officers noticed anomalies with the hull of the ship, which was inbound from Jamaica. With the assistance of divers from the Sûreté du Québec, the RCMP recovered seven metal cylinders containing marihuana.
- In September, RCMP and Calgary Police Service seized 2,866 marihuana plants from a large commercial indoor three-stage<sup>17</sup> organic grow operation in Calgary, Alberta.
- In September, an RCMP investigation led to the seizure of 11,520 marihuana plants in an underground bunker beneath an outbuilding in Chilliwack, British Columbia.



<sup>17</sup> In a three-stage grow operation, marihuana plants take longer to mature, but will grow much larger and, as a result, yield larger amounts of dry bud per plant.

### ***International Seizures (en route to and/or Originating in Canada)***

- In January, U.S. Customs and Border Protection/Office of Field Operations seized a shipment of 615 kg of marihuana originating in Canada. The drug was found concealed in boxes in a commercial vehicle.



#### **Spice**

Over the last few years, Spice, a dried plant material that contains synthetic cannabinoids,<sup>18</sup> has come to the attention of law enforcement. It is an herbal incense promoted as a natural and legal alternative to marihuana. The product has various names (e.g. Spice Gold, K2, Yucatan fire) and is sold in specialty stores and more commonly through the internet. Although the packaging clearly indicates it is not for consumption, spice abusers smoke the product to experience effects similar to those induced by marihuana. At this time, there is little known about its production, distribution, and importation in Canada. The lack of information poses a challenge for law enforcement and border officials to identify Spice, and prevent its entry to Canada.

Project SABOT is a national interagency effort, led by the RCMP, aimed at the eradication of outdoor marihuana grow operation production sites across Canada. In 2009, a total of 145,480 plants were seized and destroyed, a slight decrease from 2008. The majority of the seizures (88%) took place in Quebec, British Columbia, and Ontario (with a large portion in the National Capital Region).

In 2009, the RCMP Coordinated Marihuana Enforcement Teams — specialized dismantling and investigative units — seized over five tonnes and approximately 140,000 marihuana plants in a reported 247 grow operations, both indoor and outdoor, across Canada.

<sup>18</sup> Synthetic cannabinoids are chemical substances that mimic the effects of THC, and are considered a controlled substance under item 1 of Schedule II of the CDSA: Cannabis, its preparations, derivatives and similar synthetic preparations.

## Hashish and Hash Oil

### Key Finding

- African countries remained key transit points for hashish (hash) products destined for Canada, as they have been since the mid-1990s. Of the total amount of hash seized in Canada in 2009, 53 percent transited through various countries on this continent.

Historically, hash and hash oil smuggled into Canada originated mainly from South Asia (e.g. Afghanistan and Pakistan), the Middle East (e.g. Lebanon), Africa (e.g. Morocco, South Africa, Mozambique, and Kenya), and the Caribbean (e.g. Jamaica). While large multi-tonne shipments of hash have been traditionally transported to Canada aboard motherships<sup>19</sup> or concealed in marine containers, commercial airlines have been used to smuggle smaller amounts of hash using either air freight or couriers/drug mules. In 2009, the quantity of hash products seized in Canada (9,907 kilograms (kg)) was six times greater than the amount seized in 2008 (1,660 kg).

### Supply and Smuggling Patterns

For many years, Morocco has reportedly been the largest supplier of hash to the global market, as reported by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). In 2008, it was estimated that Morocco produced 877 metric tonnes of hash. However, the 2009 Afghanistan Cannabis Survey indicated that Afghanistan has become one of the top hash producers in the world, producing between 1,500 and 3,500 metric tonnes. According to the UNODC's 2010 World Drug report, Pakistan, Afghanistan's neighbouring country, is listed as one of the top five<sup>20</sup> main producers of hash in the world.<sup>vii</sup>



As in previous years, Pakistan remained one of the primary source/transit countries for hash destined to Canada in 2009. Of the 9,907 kg seized, approximately 40 percent originated from Pakistan, the majority of which can be attributed to a single 4,000 kg seizure from a marine vessel. In a similar multi-tonne seizure of hash (4,035 kg), a marine shipment originating from Mozambique/Kenya was seized at the Port of Montreal. These two seizures accounted for over 80 percent of the total hash seized in

Canada, giving support to the premise that the marine mode of transportation is the preferred method for shipping large quantities of hash to Canada. In fact, the majority of hash products seized in 2009 arrived in Canada via marine shipments at the Ports of Montreal and Halifax; yet, Toronto Pearson International Airport reported the most seizures. With the exclusion of these above mentioned seizures, the majority of the hash products seized in 2009 in Canada originated either from Afghanistan or transited through South Africa.

<sup>19</sup> See Glossary

<sup>20</sup> According to the UNODC, the top five producers of hash in the world are: Afghanistan, Morocco, Central Asia, Commonwealth of Independent States, and Pakistan.

For decades, Jamaica has been the primary supplier of hash products, especially hash oil, to Canada. While seizures from Jamaica dropped significantly between 2008 and 2009, it remained the primary supplier of hash oil to the Canadian market, accounting for 68 percent of all hash oil seized in 2009. This drop could be explained, in part, by the disruption of a long-standing Ontario-based organized crime group (OC group) in 2008 which reportedly smuggled large amounts of hash oil from the Caribbean. Shipments of hash from Jamaica generally are transported through air cargo, which remained the most frequently used mode of transportation, as indicated by 2009 interdictions; air passengers continued to smuggle hash products concealed within their luggage.

### ***Trafficking Activity and Groups***

Organized crime groups in Eastern and Central Canada involved in hash importation have well-established international connections within the countries of origin, or work with individual brokers who procure the drugs at the source countries. Once in Canada, the drugs are then sold to OC groups based in other provinces.

### ***Major Seizures***

- In October, 4,035 kg of hash were seized from a shipment declared as wood crafts. The shipment originated from Mozambique.
- In September, 4,000 kg of hash were seized from a marine container originating from Pakistan. The shipment was declared as clothing.
- The largest hash oil seizure in 2009 of 152.13 kg originated from Jamaica. The hash oil was transported by air cargo, concealed within four suitcases, on a flight destined for Toronto, Ontario.

## **Key Findings**

- The United States remained the predominant transit country for shipments destined for Canada.
- There was an increase in cocaine seizures made in the air mode that transited the Caribbean, particularly the Dominican Republic.

The Caribbean has been and continues to be a transshipment region for large cocaine shipments destined for Canada, especially by marine cargo. In addition, numerous flights from this region enable organized crime groups (OC groups) to exploit commercial air (mostly passenger) for cocaine smuggling into Canada. In 2009, this activity had reached levels not seen since 2005. For the fourth consecutive year, based on seizure data, the United States was the primary transit country for cocaine destined for Canada, where the majority of cross-border smuggling was by commercial trucks. Canada continued to be a transit country for cocaine destined for Australia, albeit at a much smaller scale than was seen in previous years.

## **Supply and Smuggling Patterns**

According to the 2010 World Drug Report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the global coca cultivation decreased by five percent between 2008 and 2009.<sup>21</sup> This decrease was largely attributed to the 16 percent decline in Colombia that was not countered by coca cultivation increases in Peru or Bolivia.<sup>22</sup> Colombia represented 43 percent of the global coca cultivation, followed closely by Peru (38%) and Bolivia (19%). Global cocaine production in 2009 was estimated between 842 and 1,111 metric tonnes.<sup>23</sup>



As drug trafficking organizations in the Andean region<sup>24</sup> continually modify their smuggling tactics, partly in response to law enforcement interdiction activities, transit countries and methods of transportation vary from year to year. Organized crime groups have applied this strategy to marine shipments and commercial flights, transiting cocaine through several countries within South/Central America and the Caribbean en route to its final destinations in efforts to circumvent law enforcement.

21 Global coca cultivation decreased from 167,600 hectares (ha) in 2008 to 158,800 ha in 2009: Colombia — 68,000 ha; Peru — 59,900 ha; Bolivia — 30,900.

22 The area under coca cultivation in Colombia has decreased substantially between 2000 and 2009, primarily due to eradication efforts undertaken by the Colombian government.

23 UNODC is reviewing the conversion factors from coca leaves to 100% pure cocaine hydrochloride that is utilized to estimate the potential cocaine production in Bolivia and Peru. Therefore, estimates for potential cocaine production were unavailable for these countries.

24 This region is comprised of South American countries of Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia. The Andean region is the only area where coca bush cultivation is possible due to the required climate.

While cocaine smuggling via marine mode continued in 2009, and is traditionally used primarily for large shipments, the commercial air mode was used by couriers to smuggle smaller quantities of cocaine at a greater frequency. There have been instances, however, of larger seizures that indicated internal conspiracies within the airports both in the country of flight origin and the Canadian destination. For example, 161 kilograms (kg) of cocaine were found in abandoned luggage at Toronto Pearson International Airport from a flight from Cuba in August 2009. It was suspected that the cocaine was added during the scheduled stopover in Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic and was to be removed by the baggage handlers working at TPIA.

The Caribbean has been and continues to be a transshipment region for large cocaine shipments destined for Canada via the marine mode (including by sailboat and commercial container shipments). In 2009, the Caribbean was increasingly used as a transit zone by commercial air (mostly passenger) for cocaine destined for the Canadian market, at levels not seen since 2005. The Dominican Republic was identified as an important transit country for 2009, due to cocaine seizures either en route to/or in Canada from that country. Jamaica, which had not been of particular significance for several years, re-emerged in 2009 as a transit country of interest. Direct flights from Trinidad and Tobago and St. Lucia continued to be exploited.

Mexico has, over the past few years, solidified its position as the leading supplier of cocaine to the North American illicit drug market. Continuing efforts in Mexico to counter the Mexican drug cartels have resulted in changes to cocaine smuggling routes from that region: Central American and Caribbean countries were increasingly exploited by drug traffickers to smuggle cocaine to North America. It was estimated that 90 percent of cocaine destined for the U.S. market transited Mexico via the Central American corridor. The United States continued to be the main transit country for cocaine smuggled into Canada in 2009.

Domestic cocaine seizures for 2009 were similar to 2008 quantities — Canadian law enforcement agencies seized 2,373 kg of cocaine and 15.6 kg of crack. Reports of decreased availability of cocaine in late 2008 continued into the first quarter of 2009, yet Canadian domestic seizures remained stable. These reported decreases were partially attributed to successful law enforcement efforts along the U.S.-Mexico border. Large multi-kilogram cocaine shipments were seized mostly at Canadian ports of entry, whereas crack seizures continued to be interdicted domestically in small gram quantities.

The exploitation of the commercial trucking industry by criminal organizations to facilitate cocaine smuggling northbound from the United States was particularly apparent at ports of entry (POEs) in British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec. For instance, approximately 235 kg of cocaine concealed in tractor trailers transporting shipments of fresh produce were interdicted by Canada Border Services Agency officers as a result of three separate seizures at the Ambassador Bridge<sup>25</sup> in Windsor, Ontario between March and April 2009. Cross-border northbound shipments of cocaine were frequently exchanged for southbound shipments of Canadian-produced marihuana and MDMA (Ecstasy).

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<sup>25</sup> The Ambassador Bridge, connecting Windsor, Ontario with Detroit, Michigan, is the busiest border crossing point in Canada, and therefore is exploited more than other ports of entry.

### **Trafficking Activity and Groups**

Cocaine and marihuana continued to be the most commonly trafficked illicit substances within Canada. While the majority of Canadian criminal organizations were identified as being involved in cocaine trafficking to some degree, there were an increasing number of groups which reportedly became involved in smuggling activities in recent years.

Large-scale cocaine importation continued to be financed and orchestrated by certain Canadian criminal organizations such as those with origins in Latin America, outlaw motorcycle gangs, Italian-Canadian crime groups, and other criminal organizations. Criminal organizations with links to South, Southwest, and Southeast Asia were also facilitating these importations.

Criminal organizations located in British Columbia remained the primary cocaine suppliers to other western provinces, and in some cases reportedly distributed to OC groups across Canada. Organized crime groups in Ontario and Quebec continued to traffic cocaine to the East coast. Within the country, cocaine continued to be trafficked inter-provincially by way of private vehicles, commercial transport trucks, domestic flights, and courier companies. Unlike cocaine, which is widely distributed after its initial entry into Canada, crack<sup>26</sup> is typically produced and distributed at the local level.

### **Major Seizures in Canada**

- In July, 167 kg of cocaine, concealed inside luggage, were seized at the Fort Erie Peace Bridge POE, Ontario from a commercial transport truck.
- In July, 144 kg of cocaine were seized at the Abbotsford-Huntingdon POE in British Columbia from a commercial tractor trailer which originated in state of Washington.
- In November, 343 kg of cocaine were seized at the Port of Halifax, Nova Scotia from a marine container shipment that originated in Venezuela. The cocaine was concealed within a shipment of ceramic tiles destined for the Montreal region.

### **International Seizures (en route to Canada)**

- In July, U.S. Border and Customs Protection officers in Blaine, Washington at the Peace Arch border crossing arrested a Canadian with approximately 108 kg of cocaine in boxes in his pickup truck.
- In September, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers in California discovered 142 kg of cocaine concealed within a marine container shipment of wood flooring that originated in Peru and was in transit to Vancouver, British Columbia with a final destination in Ontario.



<sup>26</sup> Crack is cocaine base derived from cocaine hydrochloride.

**Key Findings**

- In 2009, there was a slight decrease in khat seizures compared to 2008 (from 22,710 kilograms (kg) to 19,003 kg).
- The first-ever marine shipment of khat was seized in March 2009; this was also the single largest seizure of khat in Canada since at least 2005.

The RCMP first began reporting on khat in the early 2000s. Khat is not a prohibited substance in many countries, such as England or the Netherlands; however, in Canada, khat is designated a controlled substance under Schedule IV<sup>27</sup> of the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* (CDSA). The majority of khat users in Canada are found in the Somali, Yemeni, Ethiopian and Kenyan communities predominantly located in Ontario and Quebec, and to a lesser extent in Alberta and British Columbia. Traditionally, khat has been used by these populations as part of celebrations and social gatherings. Freshly cultivated khat leaves are chewed to induce a state of euphoria and elation comparable to that of a very mild cocaine or amphetamine high. Due to the perishable nature of the drug, khat is usually smuggled by air; even so, by the time it reaches Canada, the potency of this substance is greatly diminished.

**Supply and Smuggling Patterns**

Khat is cultivated in the Horn of Africa and Arabian Peninsula, primarily in Ethiopia, Somalia, and Yemen. It is also widely cultivated east of the Horn of Africa in Kenya and Uganda. In fact Kenya remains the principal producing country for khat destined for Canada, followed by Ethiopia, and Uganda. Although khat has traditionally been smuggled into Canada by air cargo and international mail, the largest single quantity of freeze dried<sup>28</sup> khat seized (639 kg) in 2009 arrived via marine vessel. This marked the first known instance of marine transport being used to smuggle khat into Canada. This method will likely continue to be used to smuggle freeze-dried khat in contrast with air transportation generally used for fresh khat. However, drug mules — generally passengers in their mid-twenties — continued to smuggle khat aboard aircraft concealed in their luggage.

England and the Netherlands, where khat is not a controlled substance, remain the primary transit points for khat, as there are very few international flights destined to Canada which originate from source countries. There are a multitude of other countries which served as transit points in 2009, including a variety of European, Asian, East Asian, and Middle Eastern countries, as well as the United States. This list also included Jamaica and South Africa which have not been used as transit countries in previous years. It is possible that smugglers were using such alternative routes to avoid detection by law enforcement agencies.

27 While the *Catha edulis* Forsk. plant itself, or khat, is considered a controlled substance under Schedule IV of the CDSA because of the chemical element cathine, it also contains cathinone which is a controlled substance under Schedule III of the CDSA.

28 The leaves of the khat plant contain cathinone and cathine, amphetamine-like stimulants which are controlled substances in Canada. Freshly cut khat contains high levels of cathinone; dried or dehydrated khat contains cathine, a much less potent stimulant.

According to Health Canada, approximately 19 tonnes of khat were seized by law enforcement agencies across Canada in 2009 as compared to the 23 tonnes seized in 2008. Most shipments were destined for Southwestern Ontario (the Greater Toronto Area, London, Kingston, and Hamilton) and Eastern Ontario (Ottawa). Other destinations included the provinces of Alberta, Quebec, and British Columbia. For a third consecutive year, there was a large increase in khat seizures in Alberta.

Smuggling trends for 2009 were similar to those noted in previous years: “shotgunning”<sup>29</sup> remained a common shipping method for khat. The exporter generally makes an intentional, false declaration on the shipping documentation, specifically in regards to the originator’s address, to ensure anonymity should these packages be intercepted by law enforcement.

### ***Trafficking Activity and Groups***

Organized crime groups with ties to Eastern Africa and the Middle East, both from within Canada and abroad, continued to be involved in smuggling khat. Networks of exporters, importers, couriers, and distributors arranged multiple bulk importations of khat to Canada.

### ***Major Seizures in Canada***

- In March, 639 kg of freeze dried khat concealed in bongo drums were seized by the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) at the Port of Montreal from a marine shipment originating from Kenya.
- In April, 270 kg of fresh khat were seized by CBSA officers at Toronto Pearson International Airport. The misdeclared air cargo shipment, consisting of 37 boxes, transited the United Kingdom and was destined for Ottawa, Ontario.
- In July, there were multiple postal mail seizures of freeze-dried khat at Toronto Pearson International Airport. A total of 522.4 kg were seized in 71 boxes destined for various locations in Ontario, Alberta, and Manitoba. Although the majority of these shipments transited countries such as England and/or Hong Kong, and to a lesser extent Korea and the United States, some originated from source countries — Kenya, Ethiopia, and Uganda.
- In September, 208 kg of fresh khat concealed in 30 boxes were seized at Toronto Pearson International Airport from an air cargo shipment that transited England and



<sup>29</sup> See Glossary

## Heroin

### **Key Findings**

- The majority of heroin on the Canadian market was believed to have originated in South and Southwest Asia.
- The interdiction of increasingly large heroin shipments over the past few years suggested a corresponding increase in the scale of operations of the drug trafficking organizations involved in this trade.
- In 2009, 213 kilograms (kg) of heroin were seized in Canada. The significant increase in quantity of heroin seized can be attributed to a single marine shipment of 108 kg, which alone surpassed the total seized in 2008.

Since the early 2000s, South and Southwest Asia (e.g. Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, India, and Turkey) have dominated the Canadian heroin market, replacing Southeast Asia (e.g. Myanmar, Thailand, and Laos) as the primary supplier. While heroin consumption is reportedly one of the least common forms of drug use in Canada, seizures of heroin have been on the increase since approximately 2004.

### **Supply and Smuggling Patterns**



According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), it is believed an estimated 63 percent of the opium produced globally in 2009 was converted into morphine and heroin. Afghanistan was estimated to have accounted for 83 percent of global heroin production in 2009. The majority of heroin on the Canadian market is believed to have originated in South and Southwest Asia. Unfortunately, due to the unavailability of forensic profiling<sup>30</sup> in

Canada, which could identify the origin of the heroin, authorities must rely on tracing the routes of seized shipments to determine points of origin when seizures do not originate from source countries. Despite the absence of forensic profiling, a number of heroin shipments have been linked back to Afghanistan.<sup>31</sup> A scarce two percent of the heroin seized in Canada in 2009 is believed to have originated in Southeast Asia and Latin America, respectively the second and third largest source regions for heroin in the world.

Heroin synthesis is achieved through a relatively simple chemical process and can be accomplished using either acetyl chloride<sup>32</sup> or acetic anhydride. Although acetic anhydride is

30 One of the purposes of forensic profiling is to identify the geographical origin of the drug sample. The majority of drugs seized in Canada are not subject to advanced forensic profiling because of the high costs associated with this procedure.

31 One particular shipment was wrapped in layers of cloth stamped "Islamic Republic of Afghanistan".

32 Acetyl chloride is flammable, irritating to the eyes, reacts violently with water or alcohol, and requires special handling.

corrosive and requires care in handling, it is less hazardous to the user than acetyl chloride; as a result, it has become the key precursor chemical used in the synthesis of heroin. The increasing illicit demand for acetic anhydride over the past few years has resulted in a significant rise in price. According to reports submitted to the UNODC, prices for acetic anhydride have reached a high of \$750 USD per litre in Afghanistan — a substantial price to pay when it can be purchased legally for as little as one dollar U.S. per litre. At these prices, acetic anhydride comprises a significant portion of the cost of processing heroin, a cost which has not been alleviated by the drop in global opium prices.

In 2009, 213 kg of heroin were seized in Canada. This significant increase in quantity of heroin seized can be attributed to a single marine shipment of 108 kg, which alone surpassed the 102 kg seized in 2008. Pakistan remained the primary gateway<sup>33</sup> for heroin destined for Canada, followed by India, the United Kingdom, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). While a variety of concealment methods were used to smuggle heroin into the country, the most common was the use of hollowed out objects such as books, picture frames, and clocks.

### **Trafficking Activity and Groups**

Asian, Latin American, and West African criminal enterprises, operating both in Canada and abroad, continued to be involved in the smuggling and distribution of heroin in Canada. Some Canadian street gangs were also actively engaged in the heroin trade. The interdiction of increasingly large heroin shipments suggested a corresponding increase in the scale of operations of the drug trafficking organizations involved in this trade. Such large shipments not only require significant financial backing, but also require a network of well-resourced suppliers.

### **Major Seizures**

- In May, Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) officers at Toronto Pearson International Airport intercepted a shipment of books and dress shirts which originated in Abu Dhabi, UAE. Closer examination revealed nine kg of heroin concealed inside the books. The seizure was turned over to the RCMP Greater Toronto Area (GTA) Drug Section for further investigation. Three individuals were arrested and charged as a result of the joint investigation.
- In July, members from the GTA Drug Section's newly-formed Control Delivery Team in partnership with the Toronto Airport Drug Enforcement Unit<sup>34</sup> concluded a three-week investigation that resulted in one of the largest seizures of heroin in Canada. The investigation began when CBSA officers discovered over eight kg of heroin concealed in a shipment of household goods destined for a Toronto address. On July 22, 2009, the Control Delivery Team executed five search warrants leading to the arrest of three individuals. Two additional search warrants were obtained as a result of information gathered during the initial controlled delivery, leading investigators to a self-storage facility where another 108 kg of heroin were discovered. Both shipments originated in Afghanistan and transited Pakistan and the UAE before arriving in Canada.

33 In 2008, India was the primary source/transit country in terms of frequency, whereas Pakistan was the primary source/transit country in terms of quantity. This year Pakistan emerged as the primary source country in terms of both frequency and quantity.

34 The Toronto Airport Drug Enforcement Unit (TADEU) is a joint forces group comprised of investigators from the RCMP, Peel Regional Police, the Toronto Police Service, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA).

### **Seizures en route to Canada**

- In May, Indian authorities seized a courier parcel containing one kg of heroin concealed inside a stuffed teddy bear. The parcel originated in India and was destined for an address in Surrey, British Columbia.
- In November, U.S. authorities seized a courier parcel which contained over five kg of heroin. The parcel originated in Afghanistan and was destined for an address in Toronto, Ontario.

## **Opium**

### **Key Findings**

- Canadian authorities seized a record-breaking 339 kg of opium in 2009, more than tripling the amount seized in 2008.
- An unprecedented 17 metric tonnes of dried opium poppy pods (also known as dode or doda) were seized in Canada in 2009.
- The majority of opium seized in Canada in 2009 originated in South and Southwest Asia; in contrast, the majority of dried opium poppy pods (dode) seized originated from the United States.

Since the early 2000s, as with heroin, South and Southwest Asia (e.g. Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, India, and Turkey) has surpassed and replaced Southeast Asia (e.g. Myanmar, Thailand, and Laos) as the primary supplier of opium to the Canadian market. In addition, annual opium seizures in Canada have been on the increase<sup>35</sup> for several years.

### **Supply and Smuggling Patterns**

According to the UNODC, global illicit opium poppy cultivation fell 15 percent in 2009 resulting in a 10 percent decrease in global opium production.<sup>36</sup> This development was largely attributed to Afghanistan which, despite remaining the world leader in opium production, reported a 22 percent decline in cultivation which resulted in a 10 percent decline in production. However, in the 2009 World Drug Report, the UNODC stated that as much 12,000 metric tonnes of opium may have been stockpiled since 2006. Given this premise, even if opium production were to cease immediately, there would still be a sufficient amount to supply global demand for more than two years.



<sup>35</sup> Prior to 2005, opium seizures in Canada, as reported in the RCMP Annual Drug Situation reports, had never exceeded the 100 kg threshold. Beginning in 2006, the quantity of opium seized in Canada, as reported by the RCMP, began to rise significantly, surpassing the 100 kg threshold, and has continued to do so into 2009.

<sup>36</sup> Global opium production fell 10 percent from 8,641 metric tonnes in 2008 to 7,754 metric tonnes in 2009.

Canadian authorities seized a record-breaking 339 kg of opium in 2009, more than tripling the amount seized in 2008. This sharp increase can be largely attributed to the seizure of a number of significant air cargo shipments that ranged in size from 10 to 52 kg. As noted in previous years, air cargo shipments continued to account for the largest total quantity of opium seized, whereas the largest number of opium seizures were discovered in postal/courier shipments. Toronto Pearson International Airport accounted for the largest total quantity of opium seized at a Canadian port of entry, followed by the Montreal International Mail Processing Centre, and the Port of Montreal where 29 kg of opium were seized from a marine shipment of marble tiles. Other methods of concealment reported in 2009 included cans of tomato paste, industrial equipment, and rolls of curtain fabric.

Opium, rarely imported directly from a source country, is generally smuggled into Canada via a number of transit countries, many located in South and Southwest Asia. Authorities believe that a large majority of the opium smuggled into Canada originates in Afghanistan, despite the fact shipments from neighbouring countries (such as Turkey, Iran, India, and Pakistan) have accounted for the majority of opium destined for Canada in the past. In 2009, Iran, which borders Afghanistan, emerged as the primary source/transit country for opium entering the Canadian market, followed by Turkey and the Netherlands. The quantity of opium entering Canada via Southeast Asia and Latin America was assessed to be negligible relative to the amount of opium originating in South and Southwest Asia.

First discussed in last year's report, dode continued to make its presence known in Canada with authorities seizing an unprecedented 17 metric tonnes<sup>37</sup> in 2009 alone. Dode is often imported into Canada under the guise of legitimate shipments of dried flowers for arts and crafts or ornamental purposes. Unlike the opium and heroin seized in Canada, the majority of dode does not originate in South and Southwest Asia, but rather is grown in the United States.<sup>38</sup>

### **Trafficking Activity and Groups**

The Canadian illicit opium market continued to be supplied by organized crime groups, the majority of which maintain ties with suppliers in South and Southwest Asia. These groups have been known to work in partnership, distributing various types of drugs, including opium, heroin, marihuana, cocaine, and methamphetamine, across Canada and the United States.

Commonly consumed by members of the Indo-Canadian community, dode is known to be trafficked by individuals within the same community.

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37 The largest single seizure of dode occurred in September 2009 at the Ambassador Bridge. A total of approximately 5 tonnes of dode was discovered in a tractor-trailer. The shipment originated in Yuma, Arizona and was destined for a flower shop in Mississauga, Ontario.

38 The majority of Canada's supply of dode originates from illicit domestic cultivation in the United States.

### **Major Seizures**

- In January, 37 kg of raw opium<sup>39</sup> were seized after CBSA discovered the drug concealed inside 72 cans of expired tomato paste. Shipped from Iran, the cans were found in one of 18 crates carrying a variety of foodstuffs.



- Working in collaboration with CBSA and the RCMP National Ports Enforcement Teams in Halifax and Montreal, the RCMP's GTA Drug Section mounted a four-month investigation into the activities of a smuggling ring responsible for importing hashish and opium into Canada. The project began in April when CBSA officers in Halifax located 200 kg of hashish concealed in a shipping container. An additional 771 kg of hashish and 29 kg of opium were seized over the course of the investigation.
- In December, CBSA seized 1.19 metric tonnes of opium poppy pods (dode) from a marine shipment of “dried flowers” which originated in the Netherlands.

### **Seizures en route to Canada**

- In October, Jordanian authorities intercepted a courier parcel containing five kg of opium secreted inside the inner linings of two winter jackets. The parcel originated in Iraq and was destined for an address in Toronto, Ontario.
- In October, British authorities seized four kg of opium concealed inside a metal table. The air cargo shipment originated in Iran and was destined for an address in Toronto, Ontario.

<sup>39</sup> Raw opium is the dried latex that is collected from the lacerated seed pod of the opium poppy, whereas opium powder (dode) is made by grinding the dried seed pod of the opium poppy into a fine powder.

### MDMA (Ecstasy)

#### **Key Findings**

- An abundant supply of Canadian-produced MDMA (also known as Ecstasy) continued to meet domestic consumption requirements, and provide significant quantities for international markets such as the United States, which saw an increase in cross-border MDMA shipments.
- Seizures of Canadian-produced MDMA, in or en route to other countries, indicated that Canadian-based organized crime groups (OC groups) expanded their international markets.

Prior to 2004, the majority of MDMA available in Canada was manufactured in the Netherlands and, to a lesser extent, Belgium. Importations of MDMA began to decrease significantly as OC groups started producing MDMA on a large scale within Canada. By 2005, Canada was recognized as a global MDMA source. In 2009, MDMA continued to be the most sought after and widely available controlled synthetic drug in the Canadian illicit market. Global demand for Ecstasy remained high, and Canada's role as a MDMA source country was undiminished.

#### **Supply and Smuggling Patterns**

In 2009, an abundant supply of Canadian-produced MDMA continued to meet domestic consumption requirements, as well as provide significant quantities for international markets.<sup>40</sup> Domestic prices for MDMA remained at the record low levels from 2008, while purity levels of the drug remained high, or even may have increased. The nature or extent of MDMA production in Canada appeared to be unaffected by the significant shortage in the supply of MDP2P, that reportedly impacted European markets. In Europe, the shortage resulted in a decline in Ecstasy seizures and in the number of seizures of laboratories, storage, and dump sites related to large-scale MDMA production.

Cross-border MDMA smuggling from Canada to the United States, the primary foreign market for Canadian-produced MDMA, significantly increased from 2008. As in previous years, smuggling activity at or between ports of entry (POEs) was reported in the provinces of British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec.<sup>41</sup> For example, a record amount of 2.6 million dosage unit equivalents confirmed as MDMA were seized in the Pacific region in 2009. However, there was also smuggling activity across the Canada-U.S. border in other provinces, such as Manitoba.<sup>42</sup>

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40 Practically all of the MDMA seizures at Canadian POEs in 2009 involved outbound shipments en route to global destinations, as seen in previous years.

41 The Pacific region regained its status as the primary smuggling corridor for MDMA shipment entering the United States from Canada. The use of cross-border smuggling corridors aligned with Ontario, especially between Windsor, Ontario and Detroit, Michigan, continued to increase in 2009. Cross-border MDMA smuggling through New York State was also documented, albeit to a lesser extent than for Michigan state.

42 In August 2009, 100,000 MDMA tablets, as well as small amounts of cocaine and methamphetamine, were seized after a courier set off a sensor while attempting to illegally cross the Canada-U.S. border between the POEs in Manitoba/Minnesota.

Land transport continues as the predominant method of moving MDMA shipments across the Canada-U.S. border. The use of personal vehicles continued to exceed that of commercial transport, while the use of postal/courier services, and smuggling on foot across the border increased slightly in 2009. To a lesser extent, MDMA shipments were moved via rail and air (small aircraft, helicopter). Smugglers used a variety of concealment methods to move MDMA across the border in vehicles, including: spare tires, luggage, roofs, dashboards, fuel tanks, hidden compartments, and body carrying. Although shipments exclusively containing MDMA tablets were more common, cross-border poly-drug smuggling involving MDMA continued to be detected. As seen in 2008, there was more diversification in drug commodities co-mingled with MDMA smuggled from Canada to the United States, including marihuana, methamphetamine (meth), cocaine, and oxycodone (e.g. OxyContin®).<sup>43</sup>

Canadian exports of MDMA to countries in the Asia-Pacific region continued. In 2009, seizures in or en route to this part of the world indicated an expansion in consumer markets there.<sup>44</sup> Seizures of MDMA destined for Mexico and Jamaica suggested that Canadian-based OC groups were further expanding their international operations.

MDMA shipments destined for the Asia-Pacific region consisted of relatively smaller quantities transported by modes suitable for modest consignments: postal/courier services, and airline passenger luggage. By comparison, air cargo was used to transport the largest shipment, consisting of 270,000 MDMA tablets, seized in Taipei, Taiwan.

### **Trafficking Activity and Groups**

MDMA trafficking within, and from Canada showed no signs of decreasing in 2009 — nationwide seizures of MDMA totalled an estimated 955,000 tablets and 166 kilograms (kg).

While MDMA trafficking has expanded across the country, British Columbia, in particular, remained Canada's gateway province for MDMA production, trafficking, and exportation. Nevertheless, inter-provincial Ecstasy trafficking to and from the Northwest and Atlantic regions increased significantly during 2009; there were indications these activities were linked to OC groups in the Pacific and, to a lesser extent, Central regions. Over the last two years, trafficking activity in Manitoba indicated that this province became an important transit point for inter-provincial trafficking as well as a potential cross-border route for MDMA destined for the United States. Increased domestic trafficking was also reflected in significant MDMA seizures in regions of the country where seizures of small amounts have been the norm.

While law enforcement experienced several successes in 2009, including the dismantling of significant organized crime networks involved in MDMA production and trafficking in both Western and Eastern Canada, organized crime continued to drive the MDMA trade in Canada. Organized crime groups with links to China, and concentrated in the Pacific and Central regions of Canada, continued to dominate production and wholesale distribution at both the national and global levels. Other OC groups with links to Southeast Asia (Vietnamese), and South Asia (India) continued to be associated with domestic trafficking,

<sup>43</sup> The exchange of Canadian-produced MDMA for cocaine in the United States continued in 2009.

<sup>44</sup> MDMA shipments destined for the Philippines were first noted in 2008, and continued to be detected in 2009. In September 2009, Taiwanese authorities seized 270,000 MDMA tablets from an air cargo shipment originating in Vancouver.

and cross-border MDMA trafficking from Canada to the United States. A variety of other crime groups were also involved in varying aspects of the domestic MDMA trade, including Quebec-based independent groups, outlaw motorcycle gangs, crime groups with links to Eastern Europe, and independent, less-structured associates more common to the Northwest and Atlantic regions.

### ***Major Seizures in Canada***

- In May, an estimated 150,000 tablets of MDMA were seized in Riding Mountain, Manitoba from a vehicle returning to Edmonton, Alberta from Winnipeg, Manitoba.
- In July, 65 kg of MDMA powder were seized in Headingley, Manitoba from a commercial transport truck travelling from British Columbia to Ontario.
- In November, an estimated 47,000 MDMA tablets bearing the “Chanel” logo were seized at Vancouver International Airport from luggage belonging to two Japanese nationals travelling back to Japan.
- In December, 107,000 MDMA tablets, bearing the “Olympic Rings” and “Peace Symbol” logos, were seized from a residence in Vancouver, British Columbia.



### ***International Seizures (en route to and/or originating in Canada)***

- In May, an estimated 390,000 MDMA tablets were seized in Blaine, Washington, from a hidden compartment under the cargo floor of a tow truck en route to California from British Columbia.
- In November, 400,000 MDMA tablets and 45 kg of marihuana were seized in Sandusky, Michigan, as the shipments were being transferred from a small Canadian aircraft to a waiting vehicle.



## Methamphetamine

### **Key Findings**

- Canadian-based OC groups continued to produce abundant supplies of methamphetamine (meth) for both the domestic and world markets, particularly Japan and Australia.

Since the 1960s, the supply and demand of meth — one of the longest controlled synthetic drugs circulating in Canada — has surged and waned. Globally, meth continues to be one of the most desired amphetamine-type stimulants; this international demand is one of the factors responsible for Canada's continued status as an international meth supplier in 2009.

### **Supply and Smuggling Patterns**

Meth availability remained strong across Canada in 2009, reflecting steady production capable of supplying both the domestic and world markets. While an estimated 97 percent of meth seized in Canada originated from domestic laboratories, Canadian seizures of meth produced in foreign countries increased slightly, and are largely attributed to three seizures in late 2009.

Over the past decade, meth smuggling across the Canada-U.S. border, both north- and southbound, has been generally consistent, involving mostly small shipments (typically under one kg). However, in 2009, there was a slight increase in both seizures of Canadian-produced meth destined for the United States as well as in U.S. shipments en route to Canada. A December seizure of 20 kg of crystal meth destined for Canada was the largest cross-border meth seizure reported within the last decade. Personal vehicles were the predominant mode of transport used to move meth shipments across the Canada-U.S. border. Poly-drug smuggling was evident in the cross-border movement of meth from Canada to the United States; in two incidents, meth was shipped along with MDMA (Ecstasy), and in another occurrence, with oxycodone. The Asia-Pacific region, particularly Australia and Japan, was again an important consumer market in 2009 for Canadian-based OC groups producing and distributing significant quantities of meth. However, quantities of this drug seized in or en route to the Asia-Pacific region were lower than in 2008, with the greatest amount (22 kg) seized by Australian Customs officials from a foosball table transported via air cargo. The transportation method used to move illicit drugs, including meth, across the globe, typically depends on the amount/weight of the substance being shipped. Consistent with previous years, air passengers/couriers were frequently used to smuggle mid-sized meth shipments (< 10 kg), while the postal system was used to transport smaller quantities.

### **Trafficking Activity and Groups**

Organized crime groups based in Quebec continued to specialize in producing meth tablets for both the regional trade and other provincial markets (notably the Atlantic region), as well as some regions within the United States. Within the province of Quebec, logo tablets containing meth have been generally marketed as the actual drug. Outside of Quebec, however, these same tablets have been mostly held out to be MDMA (Ecstasy), although in 2009 it was reported that these pills were sold as meth in northern New Brunswick.<sup>45</sup> In recent years, both powder and crystal meth have become less available in Central and Atlantic Canada, while these forms are still prevalent in the Pacific and Northwest regions of the country.

In 2009, RCMP investigative and seizure activity continued to point to high levels of intra- and inter-provincial meth trafficking, with OC groups operating in the Pacific and Central regions of the country providing the primary supply and distribution links to the Northwest and the Atlantic provinces, respectively. Canadian-based OC groups continued to use British Columbia (Vancouver) and, to a lesser extent, Ontario (Toronto) as the main staging points for shipments destined for the Asia-Pacific region. Patterns of organized crime involvement in the Canadian meth trade were mostly unchanged from 2008. Criminal networks with links to China continued to have a prominent role in meth production, and in both domestic and global distribution. In 2009, meth shipments believed to have originated in Mexico, and destined for British Columbia, coupled with the emergence of crime groups with links to Mexico in the Quebec meth market, pointed to possible connections between Mexico and Canadian-based crime networks.

### **Major Seizures in Canada**

- In February, 10 kg of meth powder and 5,000 MDMA tablets were seized in Vancouver, British Columbia, from luggage belonging to a bus passenger travelling to Edmonton, Alberta.
- In April, 10 kg of crystal meth were seized in Evansburg, Alberta from a personal vehicle en route to Edmonton, Alberta, from Vancouver, British Columbia.
- In September, three kg of meth powder were seized by CBSA at Vancouver International Airport from an air passenger who was carrying the drug on his/her person prior to boarding a flight to Sydney, Australia.

### **International Seizures (en route to and/or originating in Canada)**

- In May, four kg of meth were seized in Narita, Japan, from luggage belonging to an air passenger travelling from Toronto Pearson International Airport.
- In September, 10 kg of meth were seized in Sydney, Australia, from luggage belonging to an air passenger travelling from Vancouver, British Columbia.
- In December, 20 kg of meth were seized by U.S. authorities in Burlington, Washington, from a vehicle en route from the state of California to British Columbia.

<sup>45</sup> These pills are often sold under the street names "speed" or "peach". Meth tablets originating in Quebec, and found circulating in New Brunswick, were commonly identified by specific logos such as "Apple Computer," "Lightning," and "Cadillac."

## Other Synthetic Drugs

### Key Findings

- The dismantling of an amphetamine lab and a PCP<sup>46</sup> lab in Quebec in 2009 indicates drug traffickers continued to produce other synthetic drugs in Canada, even though significant seizures of these types of labs have not occurred in many years.
- Increased supplies and trafficking of ketamine, especially in the Pacific and Northwest regions, as well as Ontario, indicated a renewed interest in this drug as an alternative or supplement to MDMA and meth.
- Increasingly, BZP<sup>47</sup> is being used to manufacture poly-drug or ‘mimic’ tablets, mostly sold as Ecstasy. In 2009, there was an abundant supply of BZP in the domestic illicit market and a strong increase in incidents of cross-border smuggling of tablets from Canada to the United States.

Despite the continued high demand for and availability of MDMA (Ecstasy) and meth, other types of synthetic drugs (both controlled and non-controlled) continue to resurface and emerge in the Canadian illicit drug trade. This is due in part to the ability of OC groups to diversify and shift drug commodities in response to demand and law enforcement measures. Over the past year, traditional substances, such as amphetamine and PCP, and newer substances such as gamma hydroxybutyrate (GHB) and ketamine, diverted prescription drugs (particularly synthetic opiates), and non-controlled piperazine-class drugs (BZP, TFMPP<sup>48</sup>)<sup>49</sup> were increasingly available in Canada.

### Supply and Smuggling Patterns

Overshadowed by the sharp rise in popularity of both MDMA and meth over the last decade, traditional substances such as amphetamine, PCP, LSD, and psilocybin continued to have a limited presence in the Canadian illicit drug market. Despite indications of diminished supplies, there has been ongoing domestic production of these substances as exemplified by the dismantling of an amphetamine lab and a PCP lab in Quebec in 2009.<sup>50</sup> Foreign sources of supply may have also contributed to the increased availability of these drugs in Canada, as demonstrated by a seizure at Toronto Pearson International Airport (TPIA) of almost 20 kg of amphetamine smuggled via air cargo from Pakistan.

Increased supplies of GHB and ketamine circulating in the Canadian illicit market in 2009 suggest renewed interest in these recreational drugs for their use as alternative, or supplemental, substances to MDMA or meth. Ketamine continued to be a common ingredient in tablets sold as Ecstasy, and was also found in other stimulant drugs such as meth and cocaine, supported by Health Canada drug analyses conducted in 2009. Significant quantities of gamma-butyrolactone (GBL), the immediate precursor to GHB, continued to be seized in 2009, indicative of ongoing domestic production and wider distribution. Occasional imports

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46 See Glossary

47 See Glossary

48 See Glossary

49 When BZP and TFMPP are combined, they ‘mimic’ the effects of MDMA. These and other piperazine derivatives have been used increasingly as ingredients in tablets sold as Ecstasy. For the purposes of this document, BZP will be used herein as an identifier of BZP combination and other additive tablets.

50 This amphetamine lab seizure was the third such occurrence reported since 2008. Illicit manufacture of amphetamine had not been detected before then for about a decade. The PCP lab was also the first seizure of its kind within a decade.

of small amounts of GHB continued in 2009, but domestic clandestine laboratories (clan labs) provided the bulk of supply. By comparison, ketamine supplies were either diverted from legal sources or smuggled into Canada from foreign countries. As in 2008, international smuggling of this drug continued to rise, however, the shipments seized were smaller. South Asia (India, Pakistan) was again identified as a significant ketamine source region, followed by East Asia (China). The majority of seizures were effected by CBSA at TPIA and the Toronto International Mail Centre, mostly involving shipments transported by postal/courier service. The absence of reported seizures of ketamine and/or GHB at Canada-U.S. ports of entry suggests that cross-border smuggling of these substances was either minimal or non-existent.

Opiate derivate medications, particularly oxycodone (e.g. OxyContin®), benzodiazepines, and erectile dysfunction medications, such as Viagra® and Cialis®, were among the top diverted pharmaceutical products across the country. Counterfeit versions of OxyContin® and erectile dysfunction medications have been smuggled into Canada from foreign sources, however, supply from domestic clan labs continued to increase in 2009. With the exception of anabolic steroids and anaesthetics (benzocaine, procaine, and lidocaine), most prescription drugs diverted to the illicit market were obtained from domestic legitimate sources; this shows a considerable decline in international smuggling from 2008. As in previous years, traffickers procured supplies mainly through traditional means of diversion, including double doctoring, theft, prescription fraud/forgery, and via the Internet. Cross-border smuggling of diverted prescription drugs from Canada to the United States remained limited, generally involving small quantities. In one particular occurrence, however, U.S. authorities in Bellingham, Washington seized 1,800 OxyContin® tablets mixed with 190,000 MDMA tablets from a shipment originating in the Pacific region.

Organized crime groups continued to obtain BZP powder from foreign sources, notably China.<sup>51</sup> Synthetic drug producers increasingly used BZP (and other piperazine derivatives) to manufacture poly-drug or 'mimic' tablets, mostly sold as Ecstasy. Investigations and seizures pointed to abundant supplies in the domestic illicit market and a pivotal rise in the incidence of cross-border smuggling of BZP tablets from Canada to the United States. BZP smuggling across the Canada-U.S. border continued principally in the Pacific region, although smuggling activity through the province of Ontario was also evident. In 2009, the number of tablets confirmed as BZP, and seized at U.S. ports of entry (POEs) in the Pacific region, increased from 203,897 tablets (one seizure) in 2008 to 652,369 tablets (seven seizures). The modes and methods of concealment used to smuggle BZP were similar to those used for cross-border MDMA shipments. Vehicles, commercial courier, persons on foot between the POEs, and marine vessel (pleasure craft) were used to move thousands of dosage units across the border. Shipments transported by vehicle were mainly concealed within hidden compartments.

### ***Trafficking Activity and Groups***

Trafficking of other synthetic drugs increased in 2009, indicating more diversification in the national illicit trade. Seizure activity showed that trafficking of most traditional substances remained limited and occurred across the country. PCP trafficking continued to be concentrated in Quebec, while amphetamine trafficking was seen in both Quebec and Ontario.

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<sup>51</sup> The production and exportation of BZP in bulk form from China to Canada is currently free of law enforcement interference or prosecution. Until Canada places controls on BZP, the ease by which bulk shipments can be obtained via Internet sources will ensure the production and supply of the drug. In late 2008, Canada put forth proposals to regulate BZP and other piperazine derivatives, however decisions are still pending.

On a national level, investigations and seizures demonstrated a resurgence of organized crime interests in ketamine and GHB trafficking. Ketamine distribution was reported particularly in the Pacific and Northwest regions, and in Ontario, while GHB trafficking was more widespread, with a focus on Eastern Canada.

The illicit trade in pharmaceutical drugs is an expanding problem, highlighted by increased trafficking in opiate derivative medications. In particular, oxycodone (e.g. OxyContin®) misuse and trafficking have increased in Canada, reflected in rising seizure rates and investigative activities, and in the increasing number of fatalities attributed to oxycodone use.<sup>52</sup> The increased presence of counterfeit versions of OxyContin® in both Western and Eastern Canada may be an indicator of developing organized crime involvement.<sup>53</sup> Counterfeit tablets representing Viagra® and Cialis® have been, and continued to be, a trademark activity of OC groups operating in Quebec.

Organized crime groups based in Canada have exploited the current legal status of BZP and other piperazine-class drugs, while providing ample supplies of tablets presumed to be Ecstasy, to both the domestic and global markets.

In 2009, OC groups involved in the MDMA and meth trades, including those with links to Asia, and outlaw motorcycle gangs, have shown renewed and developing interests in ketamine and GHB trafficking, and in producing, distributing, and smuggling piperazine derivatives. Other crime groups continued to play an important role in other synthetic drug trafficking specifically involving traditional substances and diverted pharmaceuticals.

### ***Major Seizures in Canada***

- In January, CBSA at TPIA seized six kg of ketamine originating in China from an air cargo shipment.
- In March, 11 kg of ketamine and five kg of MDMA were seized in Toronto from a residence.
- In August, 2,700 opiate derivative prescription drugs, including OxyContin®, were seized in Fredericton, New Brunswick, again from a residence.
- In October, 68 kg of psilocybin (dried mushrooms) were seized in Lake Louise, Alberta from a pickup truck.
- In November, 19 kg of ketamine, a small amount of MDMA, and an inactive meth lab were seized from a home in Edmonton, Alberta.

### ***International Seizures (en route to and/or originating in Canada)***

- In April 105,194 BZP tablets were seized in Blaine, Washington from a personal vehicle travelling from British Columbia. There was a similar seizure in September of 104,957 BZP tablets.

<sup>52</sup> In Ontario, oxycodone-related deaths increased from 63 in 2005 to 122 in 2008.

<sup>53</sup> Health Canada reported an increase in analysis results indicating counterfeit oxycodone (e.g. OxyContin®) products. Such tablets have tested positive for substances ranging from acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and caffeine, to heroin and ketamine.

## Precursor and Essential Chemicals

### **Key findings**

- Over the past year there has been a major decrease in the amount of bulk ephedrine seized at Canadian ports of entry.
- In 2009, new chemicals such as phenylacetylcarbinol (L-PAC), which can be used to make ephedrine, have been found across the country.

Since 2007, there has been a steady increase in the demand for and procurement of unregulated precursor and essential chemicals for synthetic drug production. While China and India have historically been the main sources of precursor and essential chemicals for Canadian synthetic drug production, in 2009 India became the primary source.

### **Supply and Smuggling Patterns**

Precursor and essential chemicals (regulated and unregulated) are primarily manufactured in China, India, and in the case of GBL, Poland and the Netherlands; they are imported or smuggled into Canada. Legitimate companies import these chemicals to manufacture goods ranging from industrial cleaners to pharmaceutical products. These chemicals can also be used to produce meth, MDMA, and a variety of other synthetic drugs in order to supply domestic and international demand. As a result, chemical shipments legitimately imported into Canada are at risk of diversion<sup>54</sup> or theft to provide clandestine laboratories (clan labs) with the materials required to produce illicit synthetic drugs. Programmes such as the RCMP's ChemWatch program rely on industry partners who work with law enforcement to prevent and investigate incidents of diversion.

In 2009, three precursor chemicals were seized at Canadian ports of entry (POEs): ephedrine, pseudoephedrine, and gamma-butyrolactone (GBL). There was a major decrease in bulk ephedrine seizures at Canadian POEs between 2008 (982 kg) and 2009 (92 kg). There was a significant decrease in both the number of ephedrine seizures (at the border) and the size of such seizures in 2009. In contrast, the amount of pseudoephedrine seized in 2009 doubled from the previous year (from 56 kg in 2008 to 118 kg in 2009). The amount of GBL seized at the border dramatically increased from 2008. The total amount of GBL seized inland in 2009, however, was less than in 2008.<sup>55</sup> In 2009, the largest seizure of GBL in Canada — 1,995 litres — originated in China; smaller GBL seizures primarily originated in, or transited, Poland and the Netherlands. Smuggling methods for precursor chemicals remained consistent with those reported in 2008: the chemicals were generally declared as another chemical or concealed like other contraband in shipments of legitimate goods such as foodstuffs or clothing.

In 2009, there was a resurgence in unique synthetic drug production methods (see Production of Synthetic Drugs, page 43), which required the acquisition of new or historically used chemicals. Phenylacetylcarbinol is one of the new chemicals that surfaced in Canada in

<sup>54</sup> Diversion is a tactic used by cooks to obtain regulated chemicals. The chemicals are either stolen from companies that are license-holders and legitimate purchasers, or are purchased from legitimate chemical companies under false pretences.

<sup>55</sup> In 2008, 369 litres of GBL were seized at Canadian POEs. Conversely, in 2009, 3,902 litres were seized. This increase was primarily the result of three exceptionally large (267L, 1,600L, and 1,995L) seizures.

2009 in connection with synthetic drug production. L-PAC is a chemical that is solely used to produce ephedrine, and has historically been used only by the pharmaceutical industry. Nevertheless, recently a number of countries (including Australia, Canada, and the United States) reported finding this chemical at clan labs. This indicates that alternative means of obtaining ephedrine for the synthesis of meth are being pursued by criminals. Currently, L-PAC is manufactured primarily in India by a very small number of companies which legitimately produce the chemical and L-PAC-derived ephedrine for domestic and international pharmaceutical companies (mostly for the production of cold medications).

Safrole, a chemical previously used in older production methods for MDMA, appeared to have made a resurgence; for example, an 80 litre seizure of safrole was made in late 2009. Since the appearance of the simpler cold method using MDP2P in 2005, safrole has not been commonly used in/for the production of MDMA (Ecstasy) in Canada. In 2009, there was also an increase in seizures of tartaric acid, which is used to upgrade the potency of meth produced using the historical phenyl-2-propanone (P2P) production method.

### ***Trafficking Activity and Groups***

The synthetic drug trade is well established in Canada. Organized crime groups/networks not only broker chemicals and operate clan labs, they also supply and control the vast majority of synthetic drug production in Canada. Organized crime groups that traditionally operated independently are now working together throughout the various stages of synthetic drug production (chemical brokering, production, and distribution). While OC groups with links to Southeast Asia continue to dominate chemical brokering operations (mostly because of ties to various Asian countries), there are a number of criminal enterprises including individual operators and semi-legitimate companies that are also brokering or procuring their own chemicals for synthetic drug production.

### ***Major Seizures in Canada***

- In February, the RCMP seized approximately 89 kg of loose powdered ephedrine found along a rural road in Middlesex county (near London, Ontario). As there was no indication of the identity of the owner, the case was closed and the precursor destroyed.
- In October, CBSA officers at Vancouver International Airport seized approximately 23 kg of pseudoephedrine from 48 containers. The shipment, which was declared as vanilla flavouring, arrived via courier from Mumbai, India.
- In September, CBSA seized sixty nine 45-gallon drums of GBL from the Port of Montreal. In total, 1,995 litres of GBL were seized.<sup>56</sup> This amount could be synthesized into 16,558 doses of GHB, which has an approximate street value of just over \$33,000,000.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>56</sup> GBL can be easily converted to GHB with the addition of sodium hydroxide (lye) and water.

<sup>57</sup> This estimate is based on assuming a street value of approximately \$10 per five mL dose.

## Production of Synthetic Drugs: Clandestine Drug Laboratories

### Key Findings

- The number of clan labs seized in Canada is consistent with previous years, including the percentage of labs seized that were devoted to meth and MDMA production.
- There is evidence of a decrease in availability of some bulk precursor chemicals in Canada, particularly for meth production.
- In addition to a resurgence of methods that were popular in the past, new methods of producing ephedrine and meth were reported in 2009.

### Clandestine Laboratory Operations



Trends in synthetic drug production have remained relatively consistent over the past five years. However, clan lab activity and precursor trafficking in 2009 suggested a shift was occurring in synthetic drug production, both in Canada and abroad. A primary factor in this shift was the increasing difficulty OC groups were experiencing in obtaining the bulk precursor chemicals for use in the production of meth (ephedrine) and MDMA (MDP2P). Some of the factors

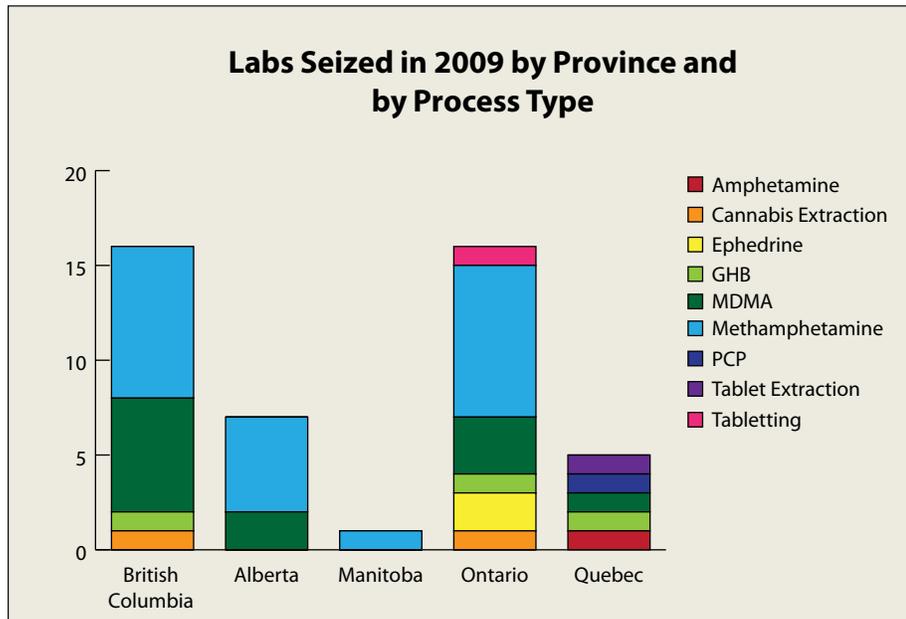
influencing this decrease in availability of precursor chemicals were the result of activity outside of Canada's borders. Reports of the Chinese government tightening controls on the production and movement of precursor chemicals were confirmed in the 2009 "Annual Report on Drug Control in China".<sup>viii</sup> Similarly, Mexican legislation passed in 2008, which banned ephedrine and pseudoephedrine and required stockpiles of chemicals be depleted by January 1, 2009, has also had an impact on the global availability of ephedrine in particular.<sup>ix</sup> There have also been reports from Europe that MDP2P seizures have significantly decreased. While this has not been reflected by the number of MDMA labs seized in Canada in 2009, nor by the types of chemicals being seized in these labs, this same trend may affect Canada in the near future.

Significant change to production methods in 2009 is additional evidence of this decreased availability of precursors in Canada, particularly for meth production. There has been resurgence in production methods that were used previously to produce synthetic drugs in Canada, but have not been used recently. One such method is the use of P2P — a production method known to give a relatively low yield of quality meth, and therefore not a preferred synthesis process. Consequently, the increase in P2P lab seizures is a strong indicator that the availability of ephedrine (used in the preferred, and higher yielding, Red Phosphorus method) has decreased.

Another new trend across the country was the increasing use of tablet extraction as a source of ephedrine for meth production.<sup>58</sup> Tablet extraction labs have been seized in past years, however, 2009 marked the first year that such labs became the norm in terms of acquiring ephedrine.

In 2009, 45 clan labs were seized by various Canadian police agencies. The majority of labs seized were meth labs — twice as many meth labs were seized as MDMA labs. This is particularly interesting given the aforementioned reduction in availability of bulk ephedrine.

**Chart 2**



As reported in the Precursor and Essential Chemicals section (see page 41), there were a number of significant GBL seizures in Canada in 2009. While only two GHB labs were recorded for 2009, this is not unusual due to the ease with which GHB is produced. The manufacture of GHB requires only three basic chemicals (all of which are available at local hardware stores) and a kitchen stove. Given the simplicity of the production method, GHB labs are difficult to locate.<sup>59</sup>

The vast majority of clan labs seized in Canada continued to be located in urban areas, primarily in the Vancouver region, the Greater Toronto Area, and the Montreal region. The relative compactness of synthetic drug production reduces the space requirement and allows for labs to be located in simple family dwellings and apartments.

<sup>58</sup> See Glossary

<sup>59</sup> Most of the reporting relating to clan labs is supplied by specialized teams that investigate and dismantle these illicit labs. With GHB, the synthesis process (using GBL) is so simple that often such teams will not be contacted, and there is less direct reporting available on the existence and nature of these types of labs.

### ***Production Activity and Groups***

Organized crime groups and criminal networks are believed to be responsible for economic-based<sup>60</sup> labs in Canada. These groups have the resources to manage the complexity of clandestine synthetic drug production, including the procurement of precursor chemicals and the distribution of the final products to both domestic and international markets. Despite a slight increase in the number of addiction-based<sup>61</sup> labs seized in 2009, in comparison to economic-based labs, there are now relatively few addiction-based labs in Canada.<sup>62</sup>

### ***Major Seizures in Canada***

- In April, the RCMP seized a non-operational L-PAC lab in Surrey, British Columbia. The lab, linked to drug operations in other parts of the country, included scientific-grade equipment and various recipes and instructions to produce ephedrine from L-PAC, and to produce meth and MDMA. Each keg was reported to contain 20 kg of L-PAC.
- In August 2009, the RCMP seized a boxed meth lab in Chestermere, Alberta. The lab contained chemicals that were consistent with the Wacker Oxidation method<sup>63</sup> of producing meth (an uncommon production method in Canada), as well as lab equipment, and a tableting machine.

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60 See Glossary

61 See Glossary

62 This increase may be attributed to a variety of factors including the ephedrine shortage and new data sources.

63 See Glossary

## APPENDIX A: CANADA DRUG SEIZURE DATA\*

### Canada Drug Seizure Data \*

	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cocaine	2,676 kg	2,630 kg	2,263 kg	2,372.99 kg
Hashish	27,730 kg	227 kg	899 kg	9,666.60 kg
Hashish Oil	1,060 kg	115 kg	761 kg	241.36 kg
Heroin	93 kg	112 kg	102 kg	212.95 kg
Khat	13,917 kg	28,270 kg	22,710 kg	19,002.94 kg
Marihuana	1,749,057 plt / 13,154 kg	1,878,178 plt/ 49,918 kg	1,828,861 plt/ 37,169 kg	1,845,734 plt/ 34m391 kg
MDMA (Ecstasy)	3,000,347 units	1,374,592 units	1,494,769 units	954,929 units
Methamphetamine	58.506 kg	170.50 kg / 9,000 tablets	109 kg / 52,142 tablets	78.79 kg / 62,307 tablets
Opium	124 kg	148 kg	108 kg	338.46 kg Dode: 17.11 tonnes

#### **\*Seizure data for the 2009 report**

Seizure data provided in this report is based on information collected from a variety of sources, including RCMP databases, Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) information, and Health Canada's Controlled Drugs and Substances Database (CDSDB). In 2008 and 2009, the RCMP worked closely with Health Canada to reach a consensus and determine the most accurate seizure statistics possible based on the information contained in their respective databases. The seizure statistics reported in this document are the same as those provided to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for 2009. Any significant increases or decreases in quantities seized in the above table do not necessarily reflect changes in either production or law enforcement efforts.

## **Endnotes**

- i RCMP News release: "New Program to Combat Synthetic Drugs Announced", August 25, 2009. <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/news-nouvelles/2009/20090825-synthetic-drug-eng.htm>.
- ii "Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2009," by Mia Dauvergne and John Turner. Juristat Article Summer 2010, Vol. 30, No. 2.
- iii United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, World Drug Report 2010 (New York: United Nations, 2010).
- iv Health Canada, The Canadian Alcohol and Drug Use Monitoring Survey (CADUMS) 2009.
- v U.S. Department of Justice National Drug Intelligence Center, National Drug Threat Assessment 2009 & 2010 (Washington: NDIC: December 2008 & February 2010).
- vi United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, World Drug Report 2010 (New York: United Nations, 2010).
- vii Afghanistan Cannabis Survey 2009, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) with the Government of Afghanistan Ministry of Counter Narcotics (2010).
- viii Office of China National Narcotics Control Commission "Annual Report on Drug Control in China", 2010.
- ix RCMP Annual Report on the Illicit Drug Situation in Canada — 2008.



