



The Influence of Narcotics and Illegal Drugs in Society: Facts and Efforts for Prevention

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Abstract

This article aims to analyze the phenomenology of narcotics and illegal drug abuse in society. This study uses a qualitative method with content analysis. The research was conducted in an area in South Sulawesi, Indonesia, focusing on trends in narcotics abuse and countermeasures taken by the police. Data was obtained from the analysis of 15 official documents, such as annual police reports, data on narcotics abuse cases from 2018 to 2023, and narcotics handling policies. The analysis tool used was a thematic categorization table to group data based on case patterns and the forms of intervention carried out. The data analysis technique used was content analysis with a descriptive-qualitative approach. The results of the study show an increase in the number of cases in 2019 (49 cases), 2022 (45 cases), and 2023 (60 cases). Countermeasures were carried out through pre-emptive (education and guidance), preventive (routine operations in vulnerable locations), and repressive (law enforcement against perpetrators) strategies. This study emphasizes the importance of community involvement and cross-sectoral synergy to prevent and combat drug abuse in a sustainable manner.

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INTRODUCTION

One form of transnational crime that is very serious and has a major impact on the future of a nation's generation, especially the younger generation, is the crime of narcotics and illegal drug abuse (Isvany et al., 2024; Rusdiyanto et al., 2024). This crime has become commonplace in Indonesian society, as can be seen in media reports on various cases of narcotics and illegal drugs that have been uncovered by the police. These cases include the possession, storage, use, distribution, and production of narcotics (Gukguk & Jaya, 2019; Harimusti et al., 2023). Currently, society is facing the reality of increasing abuse of narcotics and other dangerous drugs (Mintawati & Budiman, 2021). Although narcotics are actually intended for medical and scientific purposes, these substances are abused by irresponsible individuals or groups involved in narcotics crimes (Alfikri & Srihadiati, 2025). Drug abuse no longer recognizes age and gender boundaries, involving children, adolescents, adults, and even the elderly. Both men and women are involved in the abuse of narcotics and illegal drugs (Abi Febriansyah & Hasan, 2025; Saragih et al., 2024).

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Based on a report published by the National Narcotics Agency (BNN) entitled Indonesia Drug Reports 2022, the number of drug crime cases and suspects in Indonesia reached 53,405 throughout 2021. From the disclosure of the number of cases, the BNN confiscated narcotics evidence, namely 11,743,525.97 grams of methamphetamine, 872,843.53 tablets of ecstasy, 337,726.02 grams of gorilla tobacco, 28,099.97 grams of heroin, 1,411.21 grams of cocaine, 1,185.26 grams of dimethyltryptamine, 979.70 grams of hashish, 186.25 grams of synthetic cannabis, and psychotropic substances including 3,839,322.34 tablets of Schedule 3 drugs, 488,859.13 tablets of barbiturates, and 88,900.50 tablets of benzodiazepines. The spread of narcotics abuse has become a national and international issue, as it has become a form of organized crime that harms the lives of the community, the nation, and the state. In fact, its distribution is now not limited to big cities, but has spread to rural areas because narcotics are no longer considered difficult to find.

Although narcotics contain dangerous substances, they also have medical benefits, for example in the field of medicine, particularly in surgery, where drugs such as cocaine, which is classified as a Class I narcotic, are used to provide anesthesia to reduce pain, especially in eye, nose, and throat surgery, even though they still have their own effects (Armono & SH, 2014). Therefore, regulations related to narcotics must be clear, especially in terms of distribution and use, and must remain under strict supervision. Article 4 of Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics (hereinafter referred to as Law No. 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics) explains that the state guarantees the availability of narcotics for health services and/or scientific and technological development, prevents, protects, and saving the Indonesian people from narcotics abuse, eradicating the illegal distribution of narcotics and narcotics precursors, and ensuring the regulation of medical and social rehabilitation efforts for narcotics abusers and addicts.

These provisions are further regulated in Regulation of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia Number 5 of 2023 concerning Narcotics, Psychotropic Substances, and Pharmaceutical Precursors. Article 3 of the regulation stipulates that in order to ensure the availability of narcotics, psychotropic substances, and pharmaceutical precursors for health services and/or scientific and technological development, the Minister shall prepare an annual plan for the requirements of these three groups.

Drug abuse and illegal drugs are among the most dangerous crimes that can harm society, given their devastating impact on the younger generation (Hakim et al., 2024; Iqbal, 2023; Mardiani et al., 2024; Zubair et al., 2024). Drugs, short for narcotics, psychotropic substances, and other dangerous addictive substances, refer to substances or materials that, when introduced into the human body through various means such as oral consumption, inhalation, or injection, have the ability to alter a person's mind, mood or feelings, and behavior. Drugs can cause a decrease or change in consciousness, reduce or eliminate pain, and can lead to dependence (Elisabet et al., 2022; Kibtyah, 2017; Pramesti et al., 2022). This is explained in Article 1 Paragraph (1) of Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics. The abuse of narcotics and illegal drugs is an extraordinary crime that can destroy the fabric of family life, the community, and the school environment, and can directly or indirectly threaten the continuity of development and the future of the nation and state (Saragih et al., 2023).

In recent years, Indonesia has become one of the main destinations for international drug trafficking syndicates seeking commercial opportunities. In Asia, Indonesia is considered the most economically promising market for

international syndicates operating in developing countries (Hamamah, 2021).

Drug abuse and illicit drug use in Indonesia has reached an alarming level (Santi et al., 2019; Syamsuddin et al., 2023). Drug abuse and illicit drug use no longer recognize age boundaries; adults, young people, teenagers, and even children have become users and dealers of narcotics and illicit drugs (Mardiani et al., 2024). The illegal distribution of narcotics and illegal drugs in Indonesia is also very alarming. Narcotics and illegal drugs are not only distributed in big cities, but have also spread to small areas (Firmansyah & Michelle, 2024).

One region in South Sulawesi has become one of the areas in Indonesia that is a destination for drug trafficking. One of the international drug trafficking networks that has entered this region is a syndicate from Malaysia. This network uses sea routes and takes advantage of weak security at a number of ports. The drug smuggling routes that enter and circulate in this region originate from ports such as Parepare and are then distributed to other cities. The threat of drug trafficking, as described above, is not limited to urban areas in South Sulawesi, but has also reached rural areas. Rapid advances in technology, information exchange, and transportation systems have been the main drivers of the large-scale and rapid spread of drugs to various regions, including one of the regions in South Sulawesi (Afandi et al., 2020).

The number of cases of illegal drug distribution and abuse in one region in South Sulawesi in 2023 has increased compared to 2022. Police reports recorded 45 cases of narcotics and illegal drug abuse in 2022. Meanwhile, in 2023, police reports indicate an increase to 60 cases, involving 106.55 grams of crystal methamphetamine and 21,423 pills of Schedule G drugs as evidence. Based on this data, the crime of narcotics and illegal drug abuse in Indonesia, including in one of the regions in South Sulawesi, shows an alarming trend. Therefore, it is urgent to conduct a criminological study to understand the factors causing this increase (Jahati et al., 2025; Koodoh, 2014; Salmi et al., 2025; Tahir & Prasetya, 2024).

METHODS

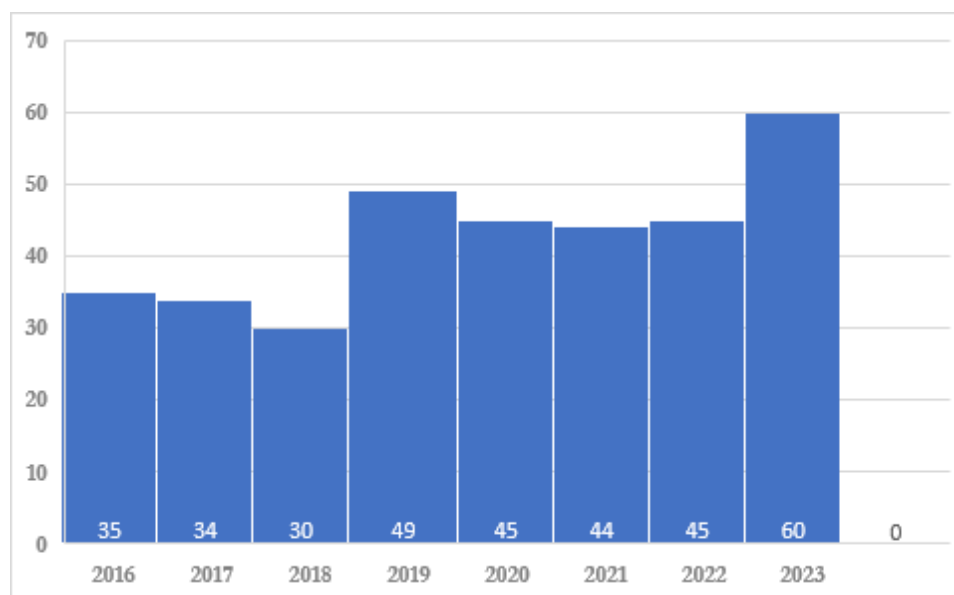
This study uses a qualitative method with content analysis. The research location is in an area in South Sulawesi, Indonesia, focusing on trends in drug abuse and countermeasures by the police (Putra, 2023). Data were obtained from 15 official documents, such as annual police reports, data on drug abuse cases from 2018 to 2023, and drug control policies. The data analysis tool used was a thematic categorization table, while the analysis technique used content analysis with a descriptive-qualitative approach to identify case patterns and forms of police intervention (Irham, 2021; Napitupulu & Putra, 2024; Sipahutar, 2018).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Criminologically, the abuse of narcotics and illegal drugs in one of the regions in South Sulawesi is a crime or unlawful act based on Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics. The abuse of narcotics and illegal drugs, especially in one of the regions in South Sulawesi, has now become an alarming phenomenon. From the data obtained by the author through the narcotics investigation unit in the region, it is known that cases of narcotics and illegal drug abuse from 2016 to 2023, within a period of 8 years, have increased significantly, especially in 2019 and 2023. Therefore, the number of narcotics and illegal drug abuse cases over the 8-year period has reached 342 cases, which have been uncovered by the narcotics investigation unit in the

region.

The number of cases of narcotics and illegal drug abuse that occurred in one region in South Sulawesi over an 8-year period, as described above, can be seen in the following graph.



Graph 1. Recapitulation of Data on Cases of Narcotics and Illegal Drug Abuse in One Region in South Sulawesi from 2016 to 2023
(Source: Police in a region in South Sulawesi)

Based on the graph above, it can be seen that there was an increase in the abuse of narcotics and illegal drugs in 2019, 2022, and 2023. In 2019, the number of cases increased to 49 cases from 30 cases in 2018. Then in 2022, it increased to 45 cases from 44 cases in 2021, and finally in 2023, it increased to 60 cases from 45 cases in 2022. Based on this description, the author then sought to identify the factors causing drug and illegal drug abuse in one of the regions in South Sulawesi through direct interviews with prisoners and the police in the region's narcotics unit.

Based on interviews with several prisoners who abused narcotics and illegal drugs, there were several different reasons why they used narcotics and illegal drugs, including:

... I started using tramadol (a Schedule G drug) to get high and because of peer pressure. He admitted to having used it several times before being arrested (informant 1); ... initially used drugs because of work demands and sold them to friends so as not to burden his parents. He learned about drugs from his friends (informant 2); ... initially just followed his friends' invitation, but then became addicted (informant 3); started using drugs because of the influence of his community environment. He was unaware of the negative effects of drugs and initially only wanted to appear cool. However, he felt a sense of calm after using them (informant 4); he did not initially intend to use drugs, but due to peer pressure and ridicule, he eventually tried them and became addicted (informant 5).

From the results of the interviews, it can be concluded that the factors causing drug and illegal drug abuse in one area of South Sulawesi include: First, environmental/social factors. The environment, whether family, school, or social circle, greatly influences a person's behavior. Life pressures and stress can interfere with decision-making. An environment that provides access to drugs also increases the risk of abuse. Second, curiosity. High curiosity, especially among young people, can trigger someone to try narcotics, even though they are

aware of the risks involved. Third, economic factors. Most perpetrators of drug abuse and distribution live in difficult economic conditions. The lure of big profits from the drug trade without hard work makes them tempted to get involved.

In addition to factors related to prisoners, there are also obstacles faced by the police in combating drug and illegal drug abuse in one region in South Sulawesi, namely First, human resource competence. The lack of ability of officials to uncover drug networks, including limited foreign language skills and knowledge of increasingly sophisticated modes of crime, is a significant obstacle. The number of officers is also not proportional to the extent of drug circulation. Second is facilities and infrastructure. Limited operational funds and technology used for investigations are major challenges. Investigations require large amounts of money, but the funds available are often very minimal. Third is the community factor. The community also contributes to the problem, both as users and dealers. This practice is rampant in nightlife venues, especially in port areas, which are entry points for narcotics.

Efforts Made by the Police in One Region of South Sulawesi to Combat the Increase in Drug and Illegal Drug Abuse

The police in one region in South Sulawesi are working with the community, religious organizations, and educational institutions to combat drug and illegal substance abuse. Based on interviews, these efforts are being carried out in a planned, systematic, integrated, and targeted manner, covering three main approaches. The first is preemptive efforts (prevention of intent). This includes educational activities to raise public awareness about the dangers of drugs. These activities are carried out through counseling in schools, village offices, and the installation of billboards/banners in public places. International Anti-Narcotics Day (June 26) is also used to promote awareness campaigns.

Secondly, preventive measures (prevention of opportunity). The police conduct routine operations in places prone to abuse, such as cafes and nightclubs, to reduce opportunities for drug abuse. Thirdly, repressive measures (enforcement). Legal action is taken against perpetrators, ranging from investigation, arrest, and inquiry to trial. This measure aims to provide a deterrent effect, as stipulated in Law No. 35 of 2009 on Narcotics, specifically Chapter XV Articles 111–149.

CONCLUSION

Human rights in Islam contain the goal of human welfare. Their implementation in the Islamic world is influenced by global political factors, with the West applying double standards to Muslim countries and using economic, military, and media power to pressure them. This has resulted in human rights issues in Muslim countries not being fully resolved and has even led to fierce opposition to Western human rights. On the other hand, Islamic human rights are limited to Islamic teachings. This has sparked debate about whether human rights are universal or relative. Universal human rights are those that are not influenced by religious values. Conversely, relative human rights are limited by the socio-cultural and sociological characteristics of a particular society, especially religion, which cannot be generalized.

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