

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL CORPORATION



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

GUIDANCE SESSION ON THE TOPIC:



Алматы 2025



DRUGS

What are drugs?

- **Drugs** are chemical substances capable of affecting the human central nervous system and forming a strong physical and psychological dependence. They are used in various forms: pills, injections, smoking, inhalation.

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Narcotic substances have been known since ancient times; many peoples used them for medical purposes, religious rituals, or to stimulate the body. However, drug addiction became a serious problem for humanity with the emergence of synthetic narcotics. These substances cause extremely strong addiction and deal severe damage to both physical and mental health. Moreover, “synthetics” produce a much stronger effect compared to heroin. All this makes these narcotic substances incredibly dangerous. They truly destroy society, despite the widespread belief among drug users that they are relatively safe compared to opiates.

Synthetic drugs

- **Synthetic drugs** are artificially produced psychoactive substances that cause psychological and physical dependence, destroy the nervous system, and mimic certain properties of opiates.
- All of them are prohibited by the government; however, manufacturers of “synthetics” constantly modify the chemical formula of these substances, making them legally permissible from a technical standpoint.



The generally accepted classification of synthetic drugs

1. By method of administration:

Most often, the substance enters the body:

- **Orally** (taking the drug through the mouth by swallowing)
- **By smoking**
- **Intravenously**
- **Through mucous membranes** (inhalation)
- **Rectally** (administering drugs into the rectum so they are absorbed by the blood vessels of the rectum and enter the bloodstream)
- **Vaginally**

2. By the effect on the body:

Unlike opiates, synthetic substances cause hallucinations and extreme stimulation of the nervous system.

The specifics of their effects largely depend on which precursors (substances from which the drugs are synthesized) are used in the production process. Due to the variety of these precursors, a wide range of synthetic drugs has emerged.

In general, after taking a dose of a synthetic drug, a user may experience the following effects:

- **A surge of strength**
- **Euphoria**
- **Increased activity and energy**
- **Self-confidence**
- **Belief in one's own superhuman abilities**

**effects are inevitably
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se fear for themselves,
ularly anxiety about the
bility of death.**

**become irritable and quick-
ered, and a so-called
piracy theory” emerges in
mind, making them feel that
hole world is against them
at everything around them
gerous.**



The most common types of synthetic drugs:

- **Speed (speds, speed).** It appears in the form of crystals intended for smoking or inhalation. It belongs to the amphetamine group and contains ephedrine, which stimulates the central nervous system. As a result, the user experiences an intense surge of energy, which is followed by a depressed state and obvious signs of poisoning.

Speed is considered a club drug because it is often used before “wild nights” that require a lot of energy.



- **LSD (acid).** It is produced in powder form, although recently liquid for soaking paper has become popular. Oral consumption predominates, although some users find alternatives such as application to mucous membranes or even intravenous use. The main effect is vivid hallucinations, which often become nightmarish and trigger panic attacks as well as suicidal tendencies. The primary danger is the cumulative effect, which often leads to mental disorders.

- **Ecstasy.** It most commonly appears in tablet form. Among young people, it is considered a relatively safe drug, which addiction specialists call a major misconception. The substance produces feelings of fearlessness and a strong desire to socialize. Users also feel a constant urge to move, for example, dancing in the middle of the street. In people with a weak central nervous system, it can cause hallucinations, during which accidental self-harm and even suicides are not uncommon.

- **Bath salts (cathinones).**
- One of the most dangerous modern drugs, causing strong dependence after the very first use. It creates feelings of invincibility and self-confidence. Often, this ends tragically, for example, when a user decides to use their perceived “superhuman abilities” to “fly” by jumping out of a window. Unlike some other types of synthetic drugs, bath salts quickly dominate the personality, making the user think only about the next dose. In addition, cathinones contribute to the degradation of intelligence—in other words, they “dull” the mind.

- **Spices (synthetic cannabinoids)**



- Smoking mixtures that have gained unprecedented popularity among drug users. The effects caused by spices are unpredictable. Some people experience euphoria, others become aggressive, injuring themselves and those around them, while still others fall into a depressed state and see terrifying hallucinations (among addicts, this effect is called “catching or hitting white”). The method of producing spices is also noteworthy – dealers buy harmless herbal mixtures from pharmacies, such as chamomile, and then treat them with chemical liquids (the so-called reagent).

- **Cocaine**

A plant-derived psychostimulant extracted from the leaves of the coca plant. Addiction develops gradually but firmly. Cocaine numbs the area from the eyes down to the chest, leaving the body feeling insensitive.

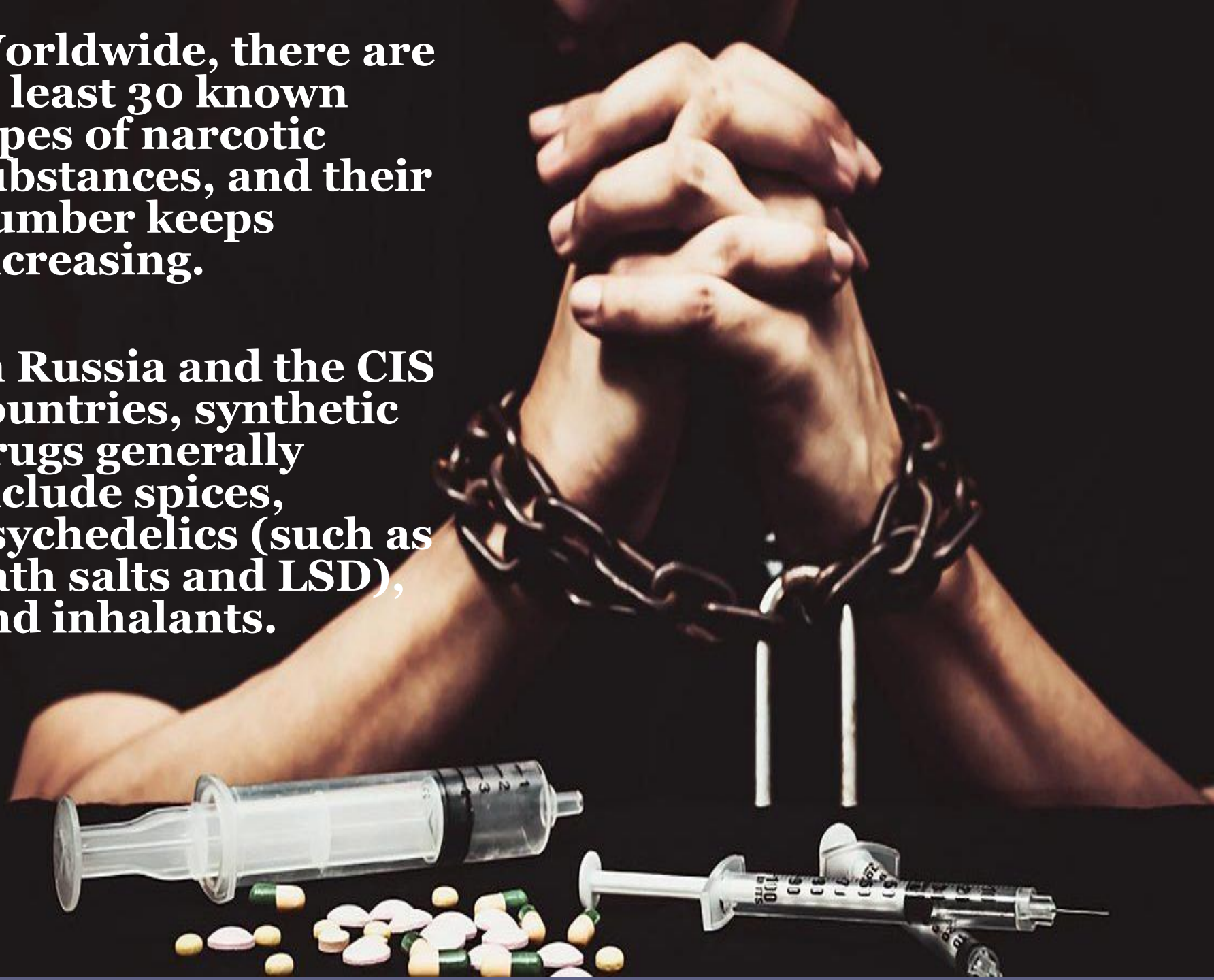


- **Inhalants**

Volatile substances that can have intoxicating effects. They are found in common household products such as dyes, solvents, glue, gasoline, hairspray, and insect repellents. While not classified as narcotics themselves, inhaling large amounts can cause intoxication. Even short-term use can be dangerous, leading to dizziness, nausea, rapid heartbeat, or loss of consciousness. Long-term use may result in serious damage to the brain, lungs, liver, and heart.

Worldwide, there are at least 30 known types of narcotic substances, and their number keeps increasing.

In Russia and the CIS countries, synthetic drugs generally include spices, psychedelics (such as bath salts and LSD), and inhalants.



Signs and Symptoms of Drug Use

Drugs have a sedative effect, and early signs of use include drowsiness at any time of day, slow or slurred speech, delayed reactions-even during conversation-and a feeling of euphoria. Even normally aggressive or emotional individuals under the influence of opioids often become calm, obedient, and tend to isolate themselves in a dark, quiet place.

Physical signs may include:

- Pale skin, sometimes with sores
- Constricted pupils that do not respond to changes in lighting
- Irregular heartbeat
- Shallow or uneven breathing
- Loss of appetite
- Reduced sensitivity to pain
- Lack of reflexes
- Decreased libido
- Rapid weight loss
- Sudden mood swings, ranging from intense joy to aggression

Effects and Consequences of Drug Use

- **Effects and Consequences of Drug Use**
- Drug use can have serious short-term and long-term effects, including:
- **Physical health problems:** damage to the heart, lungs, liver, and kidneys
- **Weight and nutrition issues:** severe weight loss and malnutrition
- **Cognitive impairments:** memory loss, reduced attention, and poor decision-making
- **Mental health problems:** anxiety, depression, paranoia, and psychosis
- **Increased risk of infections:** HIV, hepatitis, and other diseases from unsafe practices
- **Social consequences:** isolation, family conflicts, and loss of education or employment opportunities
- **Legal problems:** possession, distribution, or use of illegal substances
- **Addiction:** leading to a cycle of repeated use and withdrawal symptoms
- **Overdose risk:** which can be fatal

- The use of narcotic substances weakens the immune system, making the body more vulnerable to various infections, including HIV, hepatitis, and AIDS. It also causes problems with the veins, which can lead to inflammation, blood clots, and sepsis.
- Regular health issues may develop, such as frequent colds, heart disease, fungal and parasitic infections, and abscesses throughout the body. In women, menstrual cycle disorders may occur, while men may suffer from irreversible impotence and infertility.



16 years old

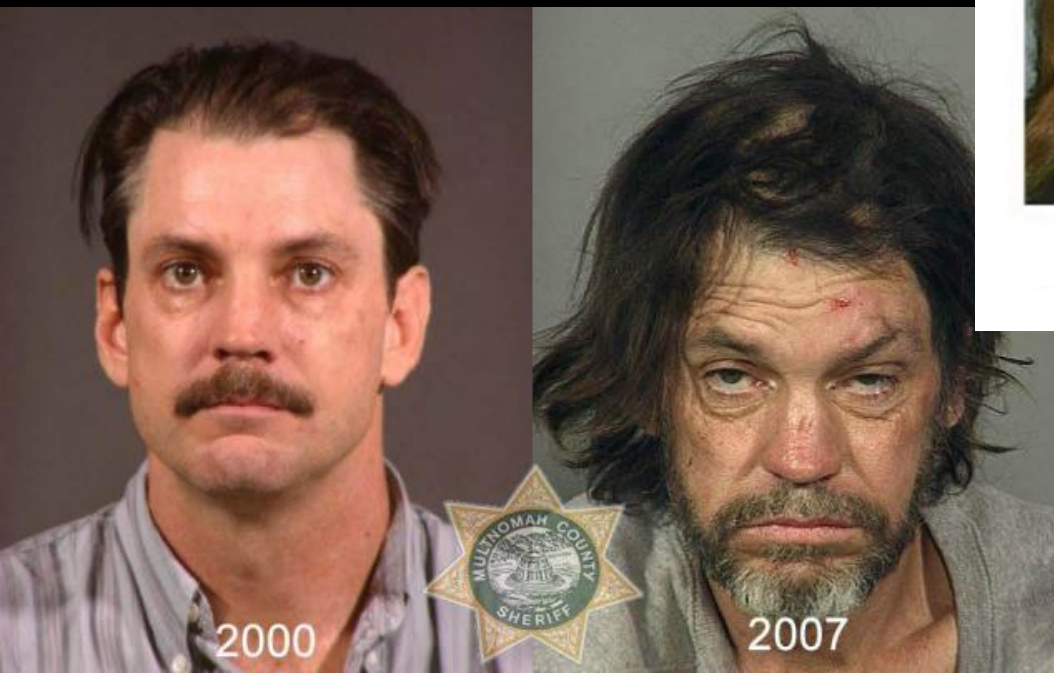
20 years old



22 years old



32 years old



2000

2007

Drug overdose

Signs of Overdose:

- Dilated pupils
- Rapid heartbeat (tachycardia)
- Sudden spikes in blood pressure and pulse
- Elevated body temperature

In rare cases, a coma may occur. However, fatal cases of synthetic drug overdose are relatively uncommon, and most deaths occur as a result of suicide rather than poisoning.



Clearing the Body of Drugs in the Event of an Overdose

In the treatment of drug addiction, detoxification is an essential part of all other procedures. Without at least partially removing harmful substances from the body, the destructive effects of the drug cannot be stopped.

There are also ways to reduce the concentration of harmful substances in the body, including some home methods:

- **Stomach pumping:** effective only if the drug was taken recently
- **Drinking plenty of fluids**
- **Consuming milk**
- **Taking adsorbents,** such as activated charcoal

- These home measures cannot replace professional medical detoxification of the blood. In the event of a drug overdose or poisoning, it is crucial to seek immediate medical attention. Attempting to manage the situation solely at home can be extremely dangerous.
- It is also strongly advised not to consume tea or coffee during poisoning. The central nervous system is already under severe stress, and these stimulants can increase the strain on the heart and brain, potentially worsening the condition. Proper medical supervision is the only safe way to reduce the harmful effects of toxic substances in the body.

Drug Addiction Treatment

The strong connection between drugs and brain receptors, along with the accumulation of harmful substances in body tissues, makes overcoming addiction extremely difficult, and in some cases, nearly impossible. Some addiction specialists may even refuse to treat certain patients, fearing that treatment could worsen their condition. However, there are clinics that specialize in treating addicts, particularly those using synthetic drugs such as “salts” and “spice,” which are among the most common synthetic narcotics.

Before treatment begins, a thorough assessment of the patient’s medical history, including any chronic illnesses, is conducted. This is crucial because such conditions can worsen during therapy and lead to serious complications. For instance, individuals with central nervous system disorders may develop schizophrenia in approximately 30% of cases. Gathering this information also allows medical professionals to determine the most effective methods for blood detoxification and overall treatment planning.

After taking the patient's medical history and conducting a preliminary examination, detoxification is carried out using methods such as:

- **Plasmapheresis**
- **Hemosorption**
- During this stage, psychotherapeutic or psychiatric support is often provided, as treatment for drug addiction is a very painful and challenging process. Patients need the support of both professionals and close family members to endure it.
- The final stage of treatment is rehabilitation, which can last from several months to several years and does not always lead to positive results. In some cases, the central nervous system is too severely damaged, and the personality may have deteriorated deeply. A major challenge at this stage is that the recovering addict may struggle to find new motivations for life, leaving their existence feeling meaningless.
- This is where support from both psychologists and family members becomes crucial. The role of loved ones is vital in determining whether the former addict will regain health and vitality or face a long and painful stay in a psychiatric facility.

Statistics

1. Number of Addicts in Kazakhstan

As of January 1, 2024, 108,722 people in Kazakhstan were registered with mental and behavioral disorders caused by psychoactive substances.

Among them, 18,329 people are specifically addicted to drugs.

91% of those addicted are men (16,817 people), and 9% are women (1,512 people).

In the 18–29 age group, about 15% (2,734 people) are affected.

2. Types of Addiction

Among the 18,329 addicted individuals:

6,080 people (33.2%) are addicted to opioids.

6,488 people (35.4%) are addicted to cannabinoids.

798 people (4.3%) are addicted to synthetic drugs.

3. Current Registration

As of 2025, approximately 17,000 people in Kazakhstan are registered as drug addicts.

In Almaty, during a 10-month period in 2022, 797 people were registered for the first time in the dynamic monitoring system.

4. Mental Disorders in Adolescents

In the 15–17 age group, the incidence of mental disorders caused by psychoactive substances in 2022 was 11.8 cases per 100,000 children.

5. Synthetic Drugs

According to official data, the number of people addicted to synthetic psychoactive substances is increasing.

In recent years, the seizure of synthetic drugs in Kazakhstan has increased 100-fold.

Fighting Drug Addiction

Fighting Drug Addiction

Fighting drug addiction is one of the most important tasks for society and the state. Prevention of drug dependence, limiting its spread, and providing assistance to addicts are carried out in several directions:

1. Prevention and Awareness

Educating young people about the dangers of drugs.

Conducting psychological and legal lessons in schools and universities.

Information campaigns to raise public awareness about the risks of drug use.

2. Legal Measures

Strict legislation against the production, transportation, and sale of drugs.

Law enforcement agencies implement special programs to detect and prevent drug-related crimes.

Operations and seizures of synthetic drugs.

3. Medical and Psychological Assistance

Medical care for addicts, including detoxification.

Psychotherapeutic and psychiatric support.

Programs for social rehabilitation and recovery.

Fighting Drug Addiction

4. Community and Family Support

Ensuring social protection for addicts.

Moral support from family and close ones contributes to the success of treatment.

Reducing stereotypes and social stigma helps addicts integrate and be accepted in society.

5. International Cooperation

Cooperation with neighboring countries and international organizations to combat drug trafficking.

Exchange of research and best practices in drug prevention and treatment.

Conclusion:

Fighting drug addiction is a complex and long-term process. It requires the involvement not only of law enforcement and medical institutions, but also of society as a whole, families, and every individual citizen.

In modern Kazakhstan

Currently, the fight against the illegal drug trade in Kazakhstan is carried out by the **Main Department for Drug Control of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kazakhstan**, in cooperation with border services and customs authorities.

According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, more than **4 tons of various narcotic substances** were seized in 2025, including approximately **476 kg of synthetic drugs**. In addition, actions of **18 organized criminal groups** related to drugs were disrupted.

In 1999, the government adopted the federal target program “**Comprehensive Measures to Counter Drug Abuse and Illegal Trafficking**”, which remains in effect today and covers the following areas:

- Measures to limit the spread of drugs.
- Anti-drug propaganda through the media and social institutions.
- Preventive measures.

According to official data, more than **17,000 people** are currently registered as drug addicts in dispensary lists. However, representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs note that the actual number of people using drugs may be **10 times higher** than the official figures.

According to the Minister of Health, in recent years the number of people addicted to **opioids** has decreased, while the number of those dependent on **synthetic stimulants or mixed use** has increased.

Measures to combat drug addiction include not only law enforcement activities but also prevention. For example, screenings of school students for synthetic drug use are planned as part of the **2023–2024 comprehensive plan**.

Forecasts

- The outlook is rather concerning, especially in the context of the coronavirus pandemic. In the short term, instability in the drug market may lead to an increase in risky methods of drug consumption and the emergence of new strategies to bypass existing controls.
- Drug users are likely to increasingly rely on the dark web to avoid personal oversight, while postal delivery of narcotics may become even more widespread. These trends suggest that both prevention and law enforcement measures will need to adapt quickly to address the evolving challenges.

- For example, the distribution of drugs using postal services has not stopped, and in EU countries its volume has increased. To conceal their shipments, criminals have taken advantage of the current situation, such as the growing demand for items like gloves, masks, and hand sanitizers, hoping that border control over these goods would be less strict. Thus, in April 2020, UK border control discovered **14 kilograms of cocaine** hidden in a batch of face masks.
- “Today, due to the partial diversion of operational focus to maintaining public order, the number of police personnel available for investigative and operational work against serious organized criminal groups (OCGs) involved in multiple types of crime has temporarily decreased. The task of all law enforcement agencies is to maintain activity in searching for and dismantling high-risk OCGs and their leaders, who are engaged in large-scale drug production and trafficking.”

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