

## Issues of cooperation in combating the spread of new psychoactive substances in the Central Asian region discussed in Tashkent



On January 16 this year, an online meeting in a hybrid format was held in Tashkent on the topic: “Analysis of the problems of combating the illegal trafficking of new types of psychoactive substances in Central Asia.”

The event was organized by ISRS jointly with the National Center on Drug Control under the Administration of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan with the support of the UNODC Regional Office for Afghanistan, Central Asia, Iran and Pakistan.

More than 30 specialists from relevant ministries and agencies, heads and experts of leading analytical and research centers of Central Asian countries took part in the online meeting.

The participants presented reports on the current drug situation in Central Asia and discussed issues of strengthening cooperation in the field of counteracting the spread of new types of psychoactive substances in the Central Asian region.



In his welcoming speech, ISRS Director Eldor Aripov particularly emphasized that the current situation in the countries of Central Asia is characterized by a steady increase in the illegal distribution of narcotics, especially synthetic ones.

"The volume of seizures and crimes in this area is growing. Advertising of narcotics on Internet platforms and social networking pages is expanding. Young people are primarily targeted by criminal groups," he stated.

According to him, individual efforts of individual countries are insufficient to effectively counter this transnational threat. In this context, Eldor Aripov pointed out the importance of the resolution "Central Asia's unified resolve and cooperation to effectively address and counter drug-related challenges" initiated by the President of Uzbekistan and adopted by the UN General Assembly on June 4, 2024. The expert noted that this document has become "a vivid symbol of the political solidarity of all Central Asian countries and partners in the need to take joint measures against a common threat."



During the event, Salome Flores, Head of the UNODC Information Centre for Researching and Analyzing Transnational Threats Related to Drugs and Crime, spoke in detail about the latest trends in drug production and trafficking in the region.

In particular, the UNODC representative outlined the drug situation in Afghanistan, pointing to a decrease in opiate cultivation, accompanied by a parallel increase in the production of synthetic drugs. Particular emphasis was placed on the potential negative impact of this trend on Central Asian countries.



At the event, the chief researcher of the ISRS, Ruslan Khalidov, also presented a draft of a joint research program dedicated to combating the illegal trafficking of new types of psychoactive substances in Central Asia.

In his speech, the expert outlined the main goals and objectives of the project, and also focused on the need to develop recommendations to improve the effectiveness of existing measures to counter new psychoactive substances within the framework of regional and international cooperation.

Overall, at the end of the discussions, the experts emphasized the importance of developing a more coordinated and effective regional strategy to combat drug trafficking. To this end, interest was expressed in conducting joint research in identifying trends in the distribution and use of new psychoactive substances in Central Asia.