Nordic Journal on Law and Society
Vol. 08, no. 01 (2026), pp. 1-31
ISSN (online): 2002-7788
https://doi.org/10.36368/njolas.v8i01.1280

NJOLAS

Drug Trafficking and Organised Crime in Low Crime States: The Icelandic Paradox

So, you can understand why there is no crime, no policeman either, and they just go about eating ice.[1]

Mary Young[2]

Department of Law, Faculty of Business and Law, University of the West of England, Bristol, United Kingdom

This article examines Iceland's emerging role within contemporary transnational drug trafficking networks and situates these developments within the broader framework of transnational organised crime and the global war on drugs. It explores how international drug-control regimes, particularly the three United Nations drug conventions and the prohibitionist policies championed by the United States during the Nixon and Reagan administrations, have shaped global understandings of drug trafficking as a security threat. The article argues that changing geopolitical and environmental conditions are shifting organised crime concerns towards the Arctic region, where Iceland is increasingly positioned as both a destination and transhipment hub for illicit drugs and other criminal activities. Through an analysis of Iceland's domestic experience, the article demonstrates how international drug-control narratives have been translated into national security responses. It contends that despite Iceland's status as a stable, low-crime democracy with strong treaty compliance, drug trafficking and organised crime remain persistent challenges. The findings highlight the limitations of punitive, treaty-based approaches to drug control and reveal a disconnect between international policy objectives and local realities in the Arctic North.

Keywords: Iceland, United Nations, drugs trafficking, organized crime, Arctic.

[1] Former President of the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte, 2019: response to Iceland initiating a resolution calling on the Filipinos to halt extrajudicial killings (Government of Iceland, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2019). It is notable that Duterte is currently indicted at the International Criminal Court for the crime against humanity of murder in the context of the war on drugs.
https://www.icc-cpi.int/philippines/duterte (Accessed 2025-09-04).

[2] Mary.Young@uwe.ac.uk

Introduction

In the 21st Century international drug laws and policies have been, and remain, constructed as part of wider, global efforts to undermine the destructive phenomenon (Zharovska, 2020) of transnational organised crime (The Naples Political Declaration and Global Action Plan against Organized Transnational Crime, 1994). The policy concept of transnational organised crime revolves around law enforcement observations that this type of organised, serious criminal activity – including drug trafficking – transcends national borders, spans multiple countries and is a crime-fighting priority (European Commission, 2023a; European Commission 2023b; Interpol, 2024; Europol, 2025). As part of the ongoing efforts of policymakers and law enforcement to challenge the dominance of the narcotics industry within the broader framework of transnational organised crime (Galeotti, 2005), the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 78/267 on the 21st of March, 2024, declaring the 15th of November as the annual International Day for the Prevention of and Fight against All Forms of Transnational Organized Crime (United Nations, 2024). Despite the creation of an annual international day of awareness, and the UN General Assembly's adoption of Resolution 55/25 establishing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime in November 2000 (hereafter referred to as the Palermo Convention), transnational organised crime – as a specific type of criminal activity – lacks a codified and internationally agreed definition although Beare (2012), offers that the concept refers to transnational crime carried out by organised crime syndicates. Under international treaty law, for a transnational organised crime to exist, it needs to fulfil the three baseline elements of Article 3 of the Palermo Convention which are the organisation of a structured, criminal group (Article 3.1(b) organised crime group), that commissions a serious crime (Article 3.1(b)), in more than one state (Article 3.2 transnational in nature). With financial gain acting as the central common denominator of most transnational organised crime activities, the pursuit of profit remains the primary driving force behind the structure, coordination, and persistence of these cross-border criminal networks, including drug trafficking organisations (Europol, 2026).

As a criminal phenomenon, transnational organised crime has been the subject of sustained critical academic debate. Scholars such as Smith (1991), Hobbs (1995), Woodiwiss (2001), Sheptycki (2003), and Hobbs et al. (2012), argue that the term "transnational organised crime" functions as a reductive political construct rather than a precise analytical category. These critical scholars contend that the term should be approached with caution – or even rejected – by policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and the wider society. According to this perspective, the concept can invite and legitimise xenophobic narratives, framing organised crime as a problem rooted in the threats presented by the externality of "Others", and thereby justifying expansive security and criminal justice policies and responses (Hobbs & Antonopoulos,

2013). This dynamic is particularly evident in the context of the so-called war on drugs, whereby such narratives have been used to rationalise futile, exclusionary, and highly punitive (including the death penalty) approaches in addressing the global drug problem (Van Duyne, 2019; Young and Woodiwiss, 2019; Regilme, 2023). For example, in the Philippines, informal settlers who are suspected of drug trafficking may be victims of "systematic extrajudicial executions" (Amnesty International, 2026a). Indeed, within the scholarly literature, references to transnational organised crime can be used interchangeably with discussions of drug trafficking, thus reflecting the extent to which the concept has become closely associated with the global illicit drug trade. Authors such as Bewley-Taylor (2013), Hesterman (2013), Calderon (2015), Flom (2019), Kabra and Gori (2023), and Raineri and Strazzari (2023), situate transnational organised crime primarily within the context of narcotics markets, cross-border drug flows, and drug-crime activity. The conceptual overlap between transnational and drug crimes, reinforces drug trafficking as central to the dominant understandings of transnational organised crime and mirrors the policy focus of the so-called war on drugs, in which drug markets are framed as the quintessential expression of cross-border organised criminality. As the focus of this article, drug trafficking is positioned at the heart of transnational organised crime discourse.

At the international law-making level, the United Nations frames drug trafficking as a central component of transnational organised crime and portrays it as one of the most serious threats to global security and state stability (Levi, 2014). Through its crime control conventions, protocols, and coordinated enforcement bodies, the United Nations promotes the view that combating drug trafficking networks is essential to safeguarding governance, economic stability, and public safety worldwide. This position is reinforced by operational initiatives such as the United Nations Police Division's Serious and Organized Crime Team, which leads the Transnational Threats Projects and prioritises international drug trafficking, supported also by the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) (United Nations Security Council Open Arria Formula Meeting, 2019; United Nations News, 2024; United Nations World Drug Report, 2025; United Nations Police Services Serious and Organized Crime, 2026). These operational activities support the three United Nations drug control treaties, these being the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 (as amended in 1972), the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 (hereafter referred to as the Vienna Convention). Under international law, states including Iceland – the case study for this article – operate within a framework of punitive drug conventions that prioritise criminalisation; often leading to the employment of militarised drug policies by states, including mass incarceration (Amnesty International, 2026a; Regilme, 2025), and as noted by the Icelandic scholar Gunnlaugsson, "domestic

covert policing" (Gunnlaugsson and Galliher, 1995). Drug policy in Iceland, and the Nordic states more widely – indeed, globally – is, as pointedly highlighted by the Nordic scholar, Träskman (2005), a failure which relies on imprisonment and punitive approaches, in states which are otherwise viewed as humanistic in their interpretation of criminal law in general.

As the "crime" focus of this article, drug trafficking is positioned at the heart of the transnational organised crime discourse. However, the novelty of this article lies in its application of the crime control global framework to the Icelandic context, which is an area of study that has remained largely absent from organised crime scholarship. By examining Iceland as a small-state case study, this article shifts the discourse from a predominant focus on developing states or high-violence contexts, such as Jamaica (Young, 2014) and Mexico (García-Reyes, 2020) to developed states, thereby challenging traditional views that transnational organised crime dynamics are confined to traditionally large or high-crime settings. In doing so, this article not only situates Iceland within the broader architecture of global drug control but also addresses a longstanding gap in the academic literature, offering an analysis of anti-drugs strategies within Iceland's organised crime landscape. Iceland is reported to be the world's safest and most peaceful country (World Population Review, 2025; Institute for Economics and Peace, 2025), and serves as an ideal case study because its consistently low overall crime rate combined with a history of penal exceptionalism (Gunnlaugsson, 2021b), contrasts with a drug issue that is intertwined with the emergence of transnational organised crime and gangs (Icelandic Monitor, 2025; Tómas, 2025); sometimes involving fatal violence (Helgason, 2021), and the use of minors as traffickers (Adamsdóttir, 2025). This article shows that Iceland can be understood as a blank slate that exposes the stark limitations of international drug-crime policies, particularly when drug trafficking is situated at the core of organised crime discourse. Against the backdrop of rising instances of transnational organised crime in a state with the world's lowest crime rate, (Þórisdóttir and Gunnlaugsson, 2010:7), it is the centrality of illicit drug markets alongside the opioid crisis (Gunnlaugsson, 2021a), that reveals the futility of punitive crime control frameworks and the evolving dynamics of criminal networks in Iceland.

Situating research novelty in existing perspectives

This article situates drug trafficking within the broader study of transnational organised crime as a complex and functioning illicit enterprise. The research in this article highlights the futility of drug laws in effectively guiding state responses to these entrepreneurial "bad businesses" (Smith, 1991; Hobbs, 1995), as argued by Young and Woodiwiss (2019), and Woodiwiss and Young (2021). However, locating academic research on criminal activities in Iceland is challenging, largely because the limited availability of crime data – stemming from Iceland's very low crime rates – has resulted in a sparse scholarly literature

base relating to drug trafficking and organised crime, despite Gunnlaugsson (2001) observing a growing public concern over drug-related crimes. The existing void in the academic literature was highlighted by the scholars Ólafsdóttir and Bragadóttir (2006), who, writing for the European Journal of Criminology, stated that "there is no research to be found" in certain areas of Icelandic crime research (including drug trafficking and organised crime), and this remains largely true at the time of writing. It is also notable that in 2010, Þórisdóttir and Gunnlaugsson identified a history of "irregular or non-existent record keeping by local officials over the years" that has further constrained researchers' ability to systematically analyse crime trends in Iceland (2010, p. 9). To further contextualise the significance of this article, academic publications from Iceland's neighbouring low-crime states in Scandinavia tend to adopt broad sociological-criminological perspectives of criminal activities (Lappi-Seppälä, 2008; Van Hofer, 2011; Bondeson, 2013). Regional publications often focus on penology including penal exceptionalism, crime and delinquency, and the analysis of criminal justice policies, (see for example, Skinner, 1986; Baumer et al, 2002; Ólafsdóttir and Bragadóttir, 2006; Valdimarsdóttir and Bernburg, 2015; Humphreys, 2023; Pakes, 2023). Disparate disciplines focus on drug use as the main issue, for example, in the fields of psychiatry (Bjarnadottir et al, 2013), and medicine (Sigvaldson, 2014), and the environmental sciences (Löve, Ásgrímsson, and Ólafsdóttir, 2022). While such works are valuable for the social sciences including public health and social policy, the academic literature remains muted concerning the presence of international drug crime and the effectiveness of the United Nations anti-drugs framework, in Iceland. The article does not treat drug offences as isolated or episodic phenomena in Iceland and neither is it a detailed study of current normative drug control frameworks (for the latter, see the extensive literature of David Bewley-Taylor).[3] Instead, the article explores drug-crime as embedded within wider structures, networks, and processes commonly associated with organised crime. In doing so, the article addresses a recognised gap in the Icelandic socio-legal literature concerning an understanding of organised crime and its control within the small-state, low-crime context.

Structure

Following the introduction in Part 1, Part 2 seeks to situate drug trafficking within the wider discourse on transnational organised crime, with a focus on the war on drugs as part of a wider toolkit to undermine organised crime. This section of the article will also address the potential shift of security concerns

[3] For example:
Bewley-Taylor, D.R., 2002. United States and international drug control, 1909-1997. A&C Black.
Bewley-Taylor, D.R., 2003. Challenging the UN drug control conventions: problems and possibilities. International Journal of Drug Policy, 14(2), pp.171-179.
Bewley-Taylor, D.R., 2012. International drug control: Consensus fractured. Cambridge University Press.
Bewley-Taylor, D.R., 2017. Refocusing metrics: can the sustainable development goals help break the "metrics trap" and modernise international drug control policy? Drugs and Alcohol Today, 17(2), pp.98-112.

from the Global South to the Arctic North; the Arctic is becoming a hotspot not only for sea ice decline and environmental damage, but also the illicit trafficking of drugs and people, with Iceland a transhipment hub and destination for both. Leading on from Part 2, Part 3 of this article will discuss the historical evolution of the current global drug-crime control framework. To understand the drug-crime challenges faced by Iceland in the present day, it is essential to recognise the Americanisation of the international normative frameworks in relation to drug control, which structures the war on drugs around the three United Nations drugs treaties. Part 3 will explore how U.S. policy leadership, under Presidents Nixon and Reagan, shaped prohibitionist approaches, embedding a global framework that positions drug trafficking primarily as an external criminal and security threat in states such as Iceland. This exploration will then set the stage for Part 4, which turns to Iceland's domestic context, examining how the international drug-crime narrative has been translated into local security concerns and responses to drugs trafficking and other organised crimes. Here, the article will focus on the rise of transnational organised crime in Iceland and the ways in which these developments reflect both global pressures and national efforts to confront and contain drug-related threats in an otherwise low crime, Arctic state. This part of the article will expose the limitations of punitive, treaty-based approaches to drug control, which have not prevented persistent challenges even in the stable, low crime, democracy that is Iceland. Indeed, Iceland's experience highlights the disjuncture between international treaty compliance and the realities of enduring domestic drug problems. The article will conclude under Part 5.

Situating drug trafficking within the transnational organized crime discourse

The so-called war on drugs means that states, for example the Philippines (Amnesty International, 2026a) and the U.S., justify aggressive, militarised and often deadly drug control efforts by pointing to the transnational character of the global drugs market, thereby situating drug control within the wider transnational crime discourse. In Iceland, the transnational character of drug trafficking was illustrated in February 2026, when law enforcement agencies across multiple European countries conducted a coordinated operation against an organised crime network accused of trafficking cocaine from South America into Europe, with Iceland identified as a significant destination along the smuggling route (Chapman, 2026). Scholars recognise that the business nature of transnational drug trafficking "entrepreneurs" (Hobbs, 1995), means they are able to exploit the successful, organised, movement of other illicit commodities such as people (Shelley, 2012), wildlife, and firearms (Van Uhm et al, 2021); all of these trades enabled by the rapid evolution of the Dark Web drug trade (Sudan et al., 2023). Paoli (2017), and Morris (2013), argue that drug trafficking not only expands illicit markets but also generates multifaceted security threats

that destabilise states and international order, allowing the wider business of transnational organised crime to flourish. This is especially the case if a nexus between drug trafficking and terrorism can be established (Shanty, 2011; Clarke, 2016). Although the link between drugs and terrorism remains a contentious area of discussion (Williams, 2012; Omlicheva and Markowitz, 2019) and one which lies outside of the parameters of this article, the potential for connections highlights the escalation of the threat narrative linked to drug crime. In the present day, drug trafficking remains a widely regarded security threat as a form of organised crime, with policy responses often framed in terms of a "war" on drugs.

In 2023, Gottschalk (2023) wrote of premature observations that the end of the war on drugs was in sight. In fact, the end of the war on drugs is far from being over. As this article on Iceland and drug crime illustrates, even relatively small and politically stable states can be reframed within the transnational organised crime paradigm, positioned as vulnerable transit points or emerging nodes in global drug markets. Iceland, for example, is currently being reimagined as a transhipment hub and destination country for cocaine (Shuldiner, 2025). At the time of writing this article, on the 3 of January 2026, U.S. forces detained Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, during a military operation in Caracas (Curtis, 2026). The intervention was framed primarily within the context of the war on drugs, and proceeded a series of recent maritime incidents, including U.S. attacks on, and interceptions of, vessels linked to drug smuggling routes in the Caribbean; these attacks are being discussed by international law experts as "possible war crimes" (Phillips, 2025; Borger, 2026). The efforts of the Trump Administration to extend the historical war on drugs, highlights broader concerns about the implications of such practices for international legal norms and the protection of human rights as part of anti-drugs strategies (Legac, 2010; Regilme, 2021). In the present day, the episodes outlined above, indicate an evolution of the war on drugs, which persists as a durable security-threat narrative that can absorb new threats (other forms of organised crime, such as those mentioned above), geographies (including the Arctic states such as Iceland), and tactics while sustaining U.S. influence abroad, bolstered by the language of transnational crime control (The White House, 2025), and the prohibitionist United Nations drugs treaties (Krajewski, 1999).

Significant shifting geographies of drug trafficking and organised crime: From the Global South to Arctic North

The significance of this article lies in its departure from the predominant contemporary, critical international literature on drug trafficking, which primarily centres on the failure of the war on drugs in developing, drug-producing states in the Global South (Woodiwiss, 2017; McCoy and Block, 2021; Kloppe-Santamaria, 2022; Husain, 2024). Current approaches to drug control,

continue to feed a Western-centric threat mantra, pinpointing Global South states as narco-pimping rogues which Hobbs & Antonopoulos (2013), define as being the "Other". In the context of this paper and expanding the theory of Hobbs and Antonopoulos, Other states exist outside of the developed world's societal, compliant norms because of illicit drug production. For example, Peru may be viewed as non-compliant with the United Nations drug control frameworks, because it is identified in the United Nations International Narcotics Control Board's annual report as having "a record level of 95,008 ha of illicit coca bush cultivation in 2022, an 18 per cent increase from 2021" (INCB Report, 2023:92). Additionally, as a powerful, global policy maker, the U.S. Department of State, perpetuates its war on drugs, by routinely publishing online statements, that it is Global South states, "which are the root causes of worldwide illicit narco-traffic" (U.S. International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, 2023). The Center for Strategic and International Studies reinforced this dangerous narrative when it stated that, "the problem begins at the source of production: South America" (Hernandez Roy, Bledsoe, and Cerén, 2023). As a destination for cocaine in the developed world, Iceland's law enforcement echoes the general narratives passed down from the U.S and United Nations that the source of the global drug problem lies in South America. Indeed, in June 2025, Stefán Sveinsson, Iceland's liaison officer at Europol in reference to a large drug seizure at Keflavik airport, stated to the Iceland Monitor that, "more high-purity cocaine is reaching the country, typically arriving in 1 kg packages prepared in South America" (Iceland Monitor, 2025).

In the present day, Arctic security is on the geopolitical agenda (Stenger, 2024; Government of Iceland, 2025; Parkash, 2025). It is Iceland's unique, geographical and strategic importance as a North Atlantic Treaty Organisation outpost (Thorsson, 2025), that is also the reason why it presents opportunities for drug traffickers and other transnational organised crime groups. The Arctic, a region that is a highly sensitive hotspot for sea ice decline (Rippeth, 2022), is experiencing rapid changes that are opening new shipping routes and expanding existing ones (Jakobsson, 2005; Gogoleva et al., 2023), thereby creating opportunities in Iceland not only for commercial traffic but also for the illicit trafficking of drugs and human beings, for which the state is a destination country and not just a transhipment hub (Council of Europe, 2023). In the context of this article, further exploration and dialogue are urgent. This urgency is heightened by developments in 2026, when U.S. President Donald Trump framed his pursuit of Greenland primarily in terms of U.S. national security, which is a broad agenda that includes the war on drugs (The White House, 2025; Bennett, 2026; Curtis and Fella, 2026). It is notable that in 2017, "a large quantity of drugs was discovered overnight aboard the trawler Polar Nanoq from Greenland, docked in Hafnarfjörður harbour" (Iceland Review, 2017). Incidents of this kind reinforce narratives that portray the North Atlantic and Arctic routes as emerging corridors for narcotics trafficking. As will be discussed in Part 3, an

"Americanised" drug-crime security discourse – in which drug flows are framed as external threats necessitating assertive territorial control (Woodiwiss, 2001) – have the potential to be rhetorically mobilised to justify heightened geopolitical interest in strategically important regions, illustrating how drug trafficking narratives intersect with the broader geopolitical ambitions of the West. Such framing signals a decisive shift in organised crime control priorities, redirecting strategic attention from the Global South to the Arctic North and recasting drug trafficking as a central component of the broader organised crime discourse in Iceland. This article aims to promote dialogue and further research into drug trafficking – indeed, organised crime at the wider level – and the effective law enforcement responses in Iceland and other low-crime Arctic states, as a crucial step toward moving beyond the reactive enforcement strategies and threat rhetoric that have long been a cornerstone of the United Nations global crime control framework. Strategies that rely heavily on the limited resources of individual states, have so far proven inadequate in addressing the evolving challenges of drug and organised crime (Levi, 2014; Van Duyne & Vander Beken, 2009) and Iceland is no exception. Accepting the unique characteristics of a low crime rate in a small state sphere, it is only natural that the conclusions in this article on the drug-crime problems faced by Iceland, will not be generalisable to all states, but they may shed light on the limitations of international drug treaty law and increasing drug-crime issues in low crime, Arctic states.

Constructing threats, exporting models: the US and global drug policy

Although drug-crime issues in Iceland constitute a central focus of this article, it is necessary to examine how contemporary drug and organised crime control has been constructed and institutionalised at the international level, before being exported to Iceland. Providing historical context is essential in supporting this article's assertion that punitive drug laws which have long been embedded within the wider organised crime control framework, have proven largely futile, yet remain politically resilient as best highlighted in 2022 when Iceland "shelv[ed] a bill that would have decriminalised possession of illegal drugs in small amounts (Ćirić, 2022). As currently conceptualised, organised crime control is a relatively recent development, shaped disproportionately by the assumptions, political priorities, and policy preferences of the United States (Gerber and Jensen, 2014; Young and Woodiwiss, 2019). The U.S. has consistently positioned itself at the forefront of drug and organised crime control, exporting its domestic enforcement strategies as models of "best practice," despite sustained scholarly debate regarding their effectiveness, proportionality, and legitimacy (Bagley 1988; Falco, 1996; Woodiwiss, 2017). Contemporary international approaches to organised crime control can be traced back to the 15 of October 1970, when the U.S. Congress enacted the Organized Crime Control Act, marking a pivotal moment in the development of

modern legal strategies against organised crime (Woodiwiss and Young, 2019). In the same year, the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970 was enacted under the administration of Richard Nixon, further entrenching a punitive orientation in U.S. drug policy. The legislation granted the U.S. Department of Justice extensive authority over both licit and illicit substances, regulating possession, sale, and trafficking, while reinforcing prohibitive and criminalisation-based approaches through the imposition of notably severe criminal penalties including life sentences for "dangerous special drug offenders" (Trebach, 1982:237). Together, the Acts of 1970 established a legislative and conceptual blueprint that would profoundly influence subsequent United Nations drug-crime treaties, including the Palermo Convention and the Vienna Convention, thereby embedding a prohibitionist and enforcement-centric model within transnational crime governance frameworks (Woodiwiss and Young, 2019). The international promotion of this punitive paradigm was explicit and unapologetic. In June 1971, President Richard Nixon convened State Department officials and ambassadors to demand a more aggressive global posture within what had been framed as the "war on drugs" (Peters and Wooley, 1971). Nixon reportedly declared that "stopping the drug traffic is more important than good tempori[s]ed relations" (Krogh, 1971), signalling that prohibitionist objectives would take precedence over diplomatic cooperation and state sovereignty. By situating Iceland within this broader genealogy of organised crime control, the article asserts that the state's drug laws including the Narcotics Act 1974 (No. 65/1974) and Article 173 (a) of the General Penal Code No. 19, February 12, 1940, reflect a deeply entrenched global prohibitionist framework, where "anyone acting contrary to the provisions of Laws respecting Dependence Producing Substances, can be imprisoned for up to 12 years".[4] As Gunnlaugsson (2021a) observes, punitive practices remain embedded within Iceland's war on drugs, despite limited evidence of a long-term deterrent impact.

Around the time that the Vienna Convention was being adopted as a global tool to combat drug trafficking, and following the end of beer prohibition in 1989, Iceland experienced a "rejuvenated rigor" in its commitment to tough criminal sanctions as part of the war on drugs – a stance that, as Gunnlaugsson (2021, 68), pointedly notes, "has not faded." The diplomatic processes leading to the adoption of the Vienna Convention were shaped significantly by U.S. participation. David Stewart, Assistant Legal Adviser to the State Department and a member of the U.S. delegation to the United Nations, acknowledged that many of the Vienna Convention's provisions mirrored existing U.S. legal approaches to drug control (Stewart, 1990:387). The widespread acceptance of the Vienna Convention can therefore be understood as a key stage in the global institutionalisation of U.S. prohibitionist ideology, facilitated through the United

[4] Iceland's drug control laws can be accessed in English via the UNODC SHERLOC database: https://www.unodc.org/cld/v3/sherloc/legdb/index.html?lng=en

Nations. The "Americanisation" of punitive drug trafficking and organised crime control policies in low crime states such as Iceland, Sweden and Denmark (Marshall, Anjewierden, van Atteveld, 1990), stems – as already argued in this article - from the belief that illicit drugs constitute an existential threat to international security and that prohibition is both a necessary and effective response. Iceland's commitment to the three United Nations drug conventions, is reflected in Article 1 of the Narcotics Act 1974 (No. 65/1974) and illustrates how global prohibitionist norms have been exported by the U.S. and internalised by states.

The Drug Treaties

The drug control treaties are the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 (as amended in 1972), the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 (the Vienna Convention). Iceland has been a party to the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs since 1974, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances since 1974, and the Vienna Convention since 1997. Iceland has complied with its international treaty obligations through the creation of the Narcotics Act of 1974 (No. 65/1974), and the Regulation on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and other controlled substances, No. 233/2001. These hard law responses to the state's drug problems, cement the flawed prohibitionist narrative that the Conventions are the "best design option" (Jojarth, 2009; 93) to counter the global drug issues which are projected from poor producing states for example those in South America onto those which are wealthy, compliant with drug-treaty laws and possess low crime rates such as Iceland.

The United Nations drug treaties present drug trafficking as a distinct crime that demands ongoing and specialised international cooperation between states and policy makers to address its nexus with other forms of transnational organised crime, including the illegal arms trade (Emerson and Solomon, 2018), and human trafficking for which Iceland is deemed to be a "destination" country (Bjarkason, 2025). Cross-border drug trafficking severely impacts and permeates legitimate economies such as fishing (Belhabib et al., 2020), including in Iceland (Vilhjálmsson, 2019), (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2017), and is part of a broader pattern of organised crime at sea, increasingly referred to as blue crime (Bueger and Edmonds, 2020). The securitisation of drug trafficking further amplifies the policy centrality of the drug treaties by linking drug control directly to the implementation of the United Nations's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Framing drug crime as a multidimensional security threat - encompassing public health, governance, and economic stability - positions it as an obstacle to achieving key goals, including good health and wellbeing (SDG 3), quality education (SDG 4), and peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16).

Specifically, SDG Target 16.4, which calls for the reduction of illicit financial and arms flows and the combatting of organised crime, becomes closely intertwined with efforts to suppress drug trafficking and its associated corruption. This alignment reinforces the normative and political weight of the international drug control conventions, as compliance is increasingly presented not only as a legal obligation but also as a prerequisite for sustainable development. Empirical research supports this linkage: Barrado et al. (2024), for example, identify low levels of education and literacy among children living in regions vulnerable to trafficking, underscoring how entrenched drug economies can undermine progress towards SDG 4 while perpetuating cycles of marginalisation and insecurity. The United Nations World Drug Report underscores that drug trafficking constitutes a significant threat to global health and security, estimating that "one in 81, or 64 million, people worldwide were suffering from a drug use disorder in 2022, an increase of 3 per cent compared with 2018" (UN World Drug Report, 2024). Beyond its public health consequences, the report emphasises how drug trafficking fuels transnational organised crime, undermines governance, and destabilises states. In this context, even geographically remote and relatively small states such as Iceland are not insulated from these pressures. Iceland's strategic position in the North Atlantic renders it vulnerable to the spillover effects of trafficking networks exploiting emerging Arctic routes, framing drug trafficking not only as a public health concern but also as a matter of national and regional security.

The International Narcotics Control Board

The institutional authority and technical expertise of the International Narcotics Control Board (hereafter referred to as Narcotics Control Board), play a central role in monitoring compliance and guiding implementation of the United Nations drug treaties, thereby embedding global prohibition norms within domestic systems. The Narcotics Control Board was established in 1968 in accordance with the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs 1961 and later amended by the Convention on Psychotropic Substances 1971 to monitor and evaluate the overall drug treaty compliance of the international community, including low-crime states such as Iceland. Today, the Narcotics Control Board acts as an independent, quasi-judicial expert body which gathers data, analyses statistics, and publishes its own annual report on the global drug situation (INCB, 2026). Through its mandate to monitor drug use and demand and to suppress trafficking and consumption of synthetic and illicit narcotics, the Narcotics Control Board situates illicit drug markets within a global governance framework that treats them as a central transnational threat.

As part of the United Nations drug control mandate, and in line with obligations under the Vienna Convention, the Narcotics Control Board prepares annual reports on states exhibiting significant or emerging drug problems. These reports analyse trends in drug abuse and trafficking and recommend

remedial actions, including treaty-mandated precursor monitoring under Article 12 of the Vienna Convention. Together with the technical publications that detail the licit production, trade, and consumption of substances (INCB Precursors, 2023), these data outputs underpin the Narcotics Control Board's Annual Report and shape international perceptions of national drug problems. While this scrutiny reflects the United Nations' commitment to supporting states, it also reinforces a threat-centred narrative surrounding drugs, echoing the historical and ongoing "war on drugs" paradigm. Iceland, in turn, is expected to align its domestic policy with this prohibitionist doctrine (Small and Drucker, 2008).

In March 2014, the Narcotics Control Board undertook its first mission to Iceland and reported persistent drug abuse, highlighting "extraordinarily high consumption of methylphenidate" and urging urgent review by national authorities (INCB News and Media, 2014; INCB Report, 2014: 27–28). By 2021, Iceland was classified as a country of concern regarding consumption patterns (INCB Report, 2022:35), and subsequent reporting noted significant opioid analgesic use (INCB Report, 2024:135). These findings underscore the persistence of Iceland's drug problem, one that has proven resistant to international control frameworks and continues to generate conditions conducive to organised criminal activity (Schneider, 2013; Rahman, 2019). In this context, demand-side pressures such as the increasing and problematic use of opioids in Iceland (Ævarsdóttir, 2018), intersects with supply chains controlled by transnational networks that operate via digital platforms (Söholt, 2024), situating drug markets as a gateway through which organised crime embeds itself within this traditionally low-crime state.

The emergence of drug-related crime as a security concerns in Iceland

States with strong democratic institutions, low crime rates, and robust commitments to the rule of law – such as Iceland – are not insulated from the pressures of drug trafficking and organised crime. Despite consistently ranking as one of the world's safest and most peaceful societies (European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction; Institute for Economics and Peace, 2023), Iceland remains subject to the globalisation of organised crime and the trafficking of drugs across borders. This vulnerability was starkly illustrated by the fatal shooting of Albanian national Armando Beqiri in Reykjavík on 13 February 2021 (Helgason, 2021). The murder of Beqiri was linked to transnational drug trafficking networks and underscored how violent drug-related crime in Iceland is increasingly connected to the broader dynamics of global organised crime. Indeed, Iceland increasingly exists within a landscape of transnational organised crime. The substantial resources deployed in the aftermath of Beqiri's murder, reflect the reactive nature of Icelandic law enforcement and policymaking when confronted with the transnational

dimensions of organised drug crime (Van Duyne & Vander Beken, 2009). As reported in the Morgunbladid, the Minister of Justice, Áslaug Arna Sigurbjörnsdóttir announced that ISK 350 million [USD$2.6million] would be made available to law enforcement bodies to combat organised crime activities including drugs trafficking (Magnússon, 2021). Additionally, the Alþingi (the Icelandic Parliament) reacted by creating a steering group to tackle organised crime activity in the country (Magnússon, 2021). Despite the creation of this anti-organised crime steering body, in 2022 there was a drug-related group stabbing at Bankastræti Club which triggered the Minister of Justice Jón Gunnarsson to declare a "war against organised crime" (Kjártansson, 2022). More recently, in February 2025, the Reykjavik Grapevine (Zubenko, 2025), highlighted that transnational organised crime is considered a significant threat in Iceland, and that a Legislative Bill amending the Act on Icelandic Citizenship, No. 100/1952 (Deprivation of Citizenship), has been proposed by Icelandic parliamentarians to revoke the citizenship of criminals convicted for involvement in organised crime groups. It is notable that the Bill was previously introduced in the 155th Legislative Assembly and was rejected, and has been reintroduced (unchanged) at the 156th Legislative Assembly. The explanatory note in the Bill states that:

> Organised crime has increased enormously in recent years and according to the National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police's Analysis Department, the risk associated with it is considered very high in Iceland. Crime has become entrenched in society, and criminal groups affiliated with certain ethnic groups from the Middle East and Southeastern Europe operate here. Organised crime threatens the security of Icelandic society and those who live here. The business thrives on the drug market and includes, among other things, smuggling of people and human trafficking. Organised crime has a wide-ranging negative impact on societies, including the frequency and seriousness of crime. Serious violence in connection with organised crime systematically undermines the security of societies and this trend has manifested itself in Iceland. (Legislative Bill amending the Act on Icelandic Citizenship, 2025).

The sentiment of the Bill, tallies with the threat-mantra narrative of bodies such as the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime which has warned that external drug-related crimes constitute a significant and growing threat to Iceland's national security and societal stability (Helgason, 2021). In 2021, the United States Overseas Security Advisory Council reported that Iceland was experiencing a "continuing increase in the cultivation of marijuana for domestic consumption and enterprise smuggling attempts to use Iceland as a transit point from North America to the EU" (U.S. OSAC, 2021). Specifically, the trafficking of drugs including amphetamines and cocaine which travel through Western countries including the United States, Spain and Germany, and low

crime countries including Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. More recently, and referencing Iceland, the Overseas Security Advisory Council observed that, "in recent years, there has been an increase in organized crime/drug-related shootings and stabbings that so far have been inter-group incidents" (U.S. OSAC, 2024). The construction of the threat narrative stemming from an escalation of drug crime in Iceland dictates that the convergence of illicit drug-based economies not only expands criminal markets but also constitutes a serious national and international security threat, undermining Iceland's state sovereignty, fuelling violence, and destabilising regional and global order.

Drug and crime control responses in Iceland

Set against this broader discourse in which drug trafficking is understood as a component of transnational organised crime, Iceland's domestic drug prevention strategies illustrate an important, but distinct, line of response. Although a detailed analysis is outside the remit of this article, it is important to highlight that the Icelandic Model for Primary Prevention of Substance Use, also referred to as the Planet Youth initiative and the Icelandic Prevention Model, applies five broad environmental and social prevention principles grounded in systematic local assessments of risk and protective factors concerning substance abuse. According to analyses by Inga Dóra Sigfúsdóttir, Álfgeir Logi Kristjánsson, Ingibjorg Thorisdottir and colleagues (Planet Youth, 2026), the model mobilises community coalitions and evidence-based interventions, supported by a notably strong policy, which may have contributed to reductions in youth substance use. While population-level outcomes appear promising, the authors caution that it remains unclear precisely how, and to what extent, the intervention and its individual components produced these changes (Kristjansson et al. 2010; 2016; 2020). Additionally, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), questions whether reductions in youth substance use can be attributed directly to the Icelandic Prevention Model itself or to broader contextual factors. Although the Narcotics Control Board attributed a "considerable drop in smoking, drinking and drug use among [Iceland's] teenagers" to preventive initiatives centred on sport, family-oriented activities and cultural provision (INCB Report, 2022: 117), the same report also recorded an increase in overall drug consumption compared to 2021. Shestak and Tsyplakova (2023) critique the Icelandic Prevention Model as an expression of "Scandinavian Exceptionalism", arguing that claims of distinct success rest on limited empirical foundations; arguably more so in a context where the Narcotics Control Board itself acknowledges an entrenched culture of drug use and associated criminality in Iceland. Framed within the wider context of transnational organised crime and cross-border drug flows, the Icelandic Prevention Model highlights the limits of local prevention alone and underscores the need to integrate community-level resilience with broader strategies addressing trafficking networks and global illicit markets.

Domestically, the endurance of a prohibitionist framework is reflected in the fact that drug offenders comprised approximately 40 per cent of Iceland's prison population in 2018 and 2019, marking a historic high (Gunnlaugsson, 2021a). As mentioned earlier in this article, under Iceland's Narcotics Act 1974 (No. 65/1974), the maximum penalty for drug offences is 12 years' imprisonment – raised from 10 years in 2001 following the emergence of ecstasy – while Section 173 of the General Penal Code (Act No. 67/1974) reinforces the severity of sanctions. Pakes' (2023) empirical research further demonstrates that a significant proportion of foreign national prisoners in two of Iceland's open prisons are incarcerated on drug-related charges, illustrating how enforcement practices intersect with questions of mobility and transnational criminal networks. Although Iceland's strict penal approach reflects its compliance with the United Nations drug control treaties, record-breaking drug seizures in recent years (Shuldiner, 2025) suggest that the punitive nature of the state's drug policy has not undermined the transnational nature of drug trafficking in Iceland. This outcome lends support to broader critiques of the global prohibitionist regime (Andreas and Nadelmann, 2006; Bewley-Taylor, 2009). As Koram (2022) argues, the United Nations "war on drugs" has mutated into a "New War" in which drugs are constructed as a universal "threat" or "poison", thereby legitimising increasingly securitised responses. In the Icelandic context, pressure from the United Nations system – particularly through the monitoring authority of the International Narcotics Control Board – to combat the drug threat may inadvertently narrow policy focus, diverting attention from the wider and more complex threat of transnational organised crime that is intertwined with trafficking networks (Askham, 2020; Hafstað, 2020; Tyrie, 2021).

This juxtaposition highlights a critical tension in Iceland's approach to drug control. On the one hand, the United Nations monitoring body that is the Narcotics Control Board frames Iceland's challenges in terms of hard law compliance – emphasising treaty enforcement, strict punitive measures, and international accountability. More recent analyses emphasise that Iceland's strict drug laws coexist with growing evidence of drug-related harms, including opioid use and overdose risks. Drug use within prisons remains a persistent concern, with seizures occurring regularly and inmates requiring hospitalisation for suspected overdoses (Chapman, 2025). On the other hand, Iceland's domestic efforts also reflect a prevention model which is grounded in community-level interventions and public health strategies. The Planet Youth initiative, while innovative, does not sit neatly within the punitive and compliance-driven framework of the Narcotics Control Board: yet both are employed by Iceland to try and undermine an increasing drug problem. This patchwork of hardline enforcement and softer interventions reflects a divergence in Iceland which is representative of a low crime state aligning

formally with international treaties while simultaneously seeking more context-sensitive, preventive solutions at the local level.

The tension between the prohibitionist, threat driven drug control and public health approaches such as Planet Youth, underscores a broader critique of the international drug control regime: that state compliance with drug treaty law may generate international legitimacy but does not necessarily translate into effective solutions to domestic drug problems. In Iceland's case, the persistence of drug-crime issues suggests that treaty adherence alone cannot resolve the complexities of drug consumption and abuse.

Conclusion

Although Boister (2016) contends that strain within the international drug control system has prompted a gradual loosening of the so-called 'Vienna Consensus' underpinning the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, this article concludes that Iceland remains structurally constrained by a prohibitionist regime that has proven ill-suited to its domestic realities. Rather than attributing escalating drug harms to Icelandic policy failure, the analysis in this article highlights the limitations of the United Nations drug control apparatus itself, which, through its punitive orientation, may inadvertently undermine the capacity of low-crime states to respond effectively to evolving, entrepreneurial and transnational drug markets. In Iceland, the persistence of drug-related prison sentences, trafficking, addiction and associated violence in a state otherwise characterised by low levels of violent crime challenges the enduring narrative that severe drug problems are primarily features of the Global South. In doing so, this article has shed light on how the global drug-crime threat discourse continues to reproduce hierarchies of deviance while obscuring shortcomings within Western contexts.

International frameworks such as the United Nations drug control conventions are viewed as essential for coordinating global action against illicit drug production, trafficking, and consumption, yet they remain grounded in a drug-crime threat mantra which can be counterproductive for low-crime states. This article has shown that, despite its compliance with international drug treaty law, Iceland increasingly experiences significant drug-related problems, including substance addiction, trafficking crimes, and serious violence, which are exacerbated by rigid international obligations. The complexities of drug control at the global level are compounded by the transnational nature of the issue, as narcotics trafficking and organised crime routinely transcend national borders and intersect with other forms of illicit activity. In Iceland, these challenges are deemed to necessitate robust international cooperation, as embodied in the drug control conventions, which provide a legal framework for harmonising efforts to regulate the production, distribution, and consumption of illicit drugs.

Ultimately, a comprehensive and cooperative international approach that combines enforcement, diplomacy, and support for domestic reform is necessary to address the complex and multifaceted challenges posed by global drug issues. International drug control must not rely solely on antiquated punitive measures but should be integrated into a broader legal strategy that balances enforcement with engagement, support for domestic reform, and respect for state sovereignty. Crucially, this also requires a deliberate process of de-securitising the drug crime threat narrative that has long framed drugs as an existential danger demanding exceptional and militarised responses. Moving away from the entrenched U.S. led "war on drugs" rhetoric would allow space for more proportionate, evidence-based, and public health-oriented strategies that better reflect the lived realities of diverse states. Moreover, meaningful reform requires acknowledging the interconnectedness of drug trafficking with organised crime, public health, and social development, ensuring that anti-drug efforts contribute to sustainable and equitable outcomes rather than reinforcing historical biases. Only through such a balanced, adaptive, and cooperative approach can the international legal community effectively address the shared challenges of global drug governance while supporting states like Iceland in managing drug-related harms within their unique social and institutional contexts.

References

Adamsdóttir, M. 2025. Criminal groups increasingly exploit minors for serious crimes. *RÚV.is*. 20 April. https://www.ruv.is/english/2025-04-20-criminal-groups-increasingly-exploit-minors-for-serious-crimes-441966 (Accessed 25-09-08).

Ævarsdóttir, H.Ö., 2018. Long-term use of opioids in Iceland (Doctoral dissertation).

Albanese, J.S. 2014. Organized Crime: From the Mob to Transnational Organized Crime. 7th edn. Amsterdam: Anderson.

Althingi. 2025. 146th Legislative Session 2025. Session Document 71 — Legislative Bill amending the Act on Icelandic Citizenship, No. 100/1952 (Deprivation of Citizenship) https://www.althingi.is/altext/156/s/0071.html (Accessed 2025-02-25).

Amnesty International (a) Drug policy reform. https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/drug-policy-reform/ (Accessed 2026-02-26).

Andreas, P. and Nadelmann, E. 2006. *Policing the globe: Criminalization and crime control in international relations.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Magnússon, A. 2021. Raise arms against criminal groups. *Morgunblaðið*. 26 February.

Askham, P. 2020. Reykjavík police investigate large-scale amphetamine production operation. *The Reykjavík Grapevine*.

https://grapevine.is/news/2020/04/23/reykjavik-police-investigate-large-scale-amphetamine-production-operation/ (Accessed 2025-09-08).

Bagley, B.M., 1988. US foreign policy and the war on drugs: Analysis of a policy failure. *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, 30(2-3): 189-212.

Barrado, B., Carballo, A., Guzmán, A. and Paniagua, J. 2024. Exposure to drug trafficking and school truancy: Empirical evidence from Costa Rica. *World Development*, 183106741.

Baumer, E.P., Messner, S.F. and Rosenfeld, R. 2002. Crime, Shame, and Recidivism: The Case of Iceland. *British Journal of Criminology*, 42(1): 40–59.

Beare, M. E. ed., 2012. *Encyclopedia of Transnational Crime & Justice.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Belhabib, D., Le Billon, P., Greer, K. and Pauly, D. 2020. Narco Fish: Global fisheries and drug trafficking. *Fish and Fisheries*, 21(5): 992–1007.

Bennett, T. 2026. Which countries could be in Trump's sights after Venezuela? *BBC News.* 5 January. Updated 6 January 2026. https:// www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cd0ye72r4vpo (Accessed 2026-02-24).

Bewley Taylor, D. 2013. Drug Trafficking and Organised Crime in Afghanistan: Corruption, Insecurity and the Challenges of Transition. *RUSI Journal*, 158(6): 6–17.

Bjarkason, J. 2025. Iceland: Once a stopover for human trafficking, now a destination. *The Reykjavik Grapevine*. 16 April. https://grapevine.is/news/2025/04/16/iceland-once-a-stopover-for-human-trafficking-now-a-destination/ (Accessed 2025-06-25).

Bjarnadottir, G., Olafsdottir, H., Jonsson, H. and Helgadottir, H. 2013. 703 – Methylphenidate abuse among Icelandic i.v. substance abusers. *European Psychiatry*, 28: 1.

Boister, N. 2016. Waltzing on the Vienna Consensus on Drug Control? Tensions in the International System for the Control of Drugs. *Leiden Journal of International law*. 29 (2); 389–409.

Bondeson, U.V. 2013. Levels of punitiveness in Scandinavia: description and explanations. In Pratt, J., Brown, D., Brown, M., Hallsworth, S. and Morrison, W. (eds.). *The New Punitiveness*. Cullompton: Willan, 189.

Borger, J. 2026. US aircraft that attacked suspected drug boat reportedly disguised as civilian plane. *The Guardian.* 13 January. https://www.theguardian.com/law/2026/jan/13/us-aircraft-attack-suspected-drug-boat-report-civilian-plane (Accessed 2026-02-09).

Brotherton, D. 2003. Dominican deportees suffer in America's failing war on drugs: US washes its hands of ex-residents taken from their families. *The Guardian.* https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/jun/14/usa (Accessed 2025-09-08).

Bueger, C. and Edmunds, T. 2020. Blue crime: Conceptualising transnational organised crime at sea. *Marine Policy*, 119.

Calderon, F. 2015. Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime: Connected but Different. *Harvard International Review* 36(4): 52–56.
Chapman, M. 2025. Iceland expands overdose treatment access in prisons', *Iceland Review*. 20 June. https://www.icelandreview.com/news/iceland-expands-overdose-treatment-access-in-prisons/ (Accessed 2026-02-15).
Chapman, M. 2026. Europol Targets Drug Ring Smuggling Cocaine to Iceland. *Iceland Review*. 10 February. https://www.icelandreview.com/news/europol-targets-drug-ring-smuggling-cocaine-to-iceland/?srsltid=AfmBOorrTB5_apLkNFVy_lyNlf0pgYW6MxnFjiQibXPeSF0a80A3y3Tm (Accessed 2026-02-26).
Ćirić, J. 2022. Disappointment as health minister shelves decriminalisation bill. *Iceland Review*. 22 March. https://www.icelandreview.com/news/politics/disappointment-as-health-minister-shelves-decriminalisation-bill/ (Accessed 2026-03-02).
Commission on Narcotic Drugs. 2019. Implementation of All International Drug Policy Commitments: Follow up to the 2019 Ministerial Declaration ... to Accelerate the Implementation of Our Joint Commitments to Address and Counter the World Drug Problem. https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND/2019_Ministerial_Declaration/19_V1905795_E_ebook.pdf (Accessed 2023-09-08).
Council of Europe. 2023. Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) Evaluation Report: Iceland, Third Evaluation Round; Access to justice and effective remedies for victims of trafficking in human beings [GRETA(2023)13]. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. https://rm.coe.int/greta-evaluation-report-on-iceland-third-evaluation-round-focus-access/1680ad10b1 (Accessed 2026-02-28).
Coyne, C.J., Hall, A.R. and Rasheed, A. 2016. The war on drugs in Afghanistan: another failed experiment with interdiction', *Independent Review,* 95.
Curtis, J. 2026. The US capture of Nicolás Maduro. House of Commons Library. 6 January. https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10452/ (Accessed 2026-02-03).
Curtis, J. and Fella, S. 2026. President Trump and Greenland: Frequently asked questions. Research Briefing, House of Commons Library, published Friday 23 January 2026. https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10472/ (Accessed 2026-02-03).
Edwards, A. and Gill, P. 2002. The Politics of "Transnational Organized Crime": Discourse, Reflexivity and the Narration of "Threat"'. *British Journal of Politics & International Relations*, 4(2): 245–270.

Emerson S., Solomon H. 2018. *African Security in the Twenty-First Century.* Manchester University Press: UK.

European Commission. 2023a. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the EU roadmap to fight drug trafficking and organised crime, COM/2023/641 final, Brussels, 18 October. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52023DC0641 (Accessed 2024-06-20).

European Commission. 2023b. New EU Roadmap steps up the fight against drug trafficking and organised crime. Directorate General for Migration and Home Affairs, 18 October. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/new-eu-roadmap-steps-fight-against-drug-trafficking-and-organised-crime-2023-10-18_en (Accessed 2024-06-20).

European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) (n.d.) Country Data. https://www.emcdda.europa.eu/countries_en (Accessed 2023-08-310).

Europol. 2025. *European Union Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment – The changing DNA of serious and organised crime.* Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Europol. 2026. *Criminal finances and money laundering* https://www.europol.europa.eu/crime-areas/criminal-finances-and-money-laundering (Accessed 2026-01-27)

Falco, M., 1996. US drug policy: Addicted to failure. *Foreign Policy* 102:120-133.

FATF (n.d.) Publications. https://www.fatf-gafi.org/en/publications.html (Accessed 2025-02-25).

Flom, H. 2019. State Regulation of Organized Crime: Politicians, Police, and Drug Trafficking in Argentina. *Latin American Politics and Society* 61(3): 104–128.

Galeotti, M. 2005. Introduction: global crime today', in *Global Crime Today: The Changing Face of Organised Crime*. 1st edn. London: Routledge.

Gailey, P. 1986. U.S. War on Drugs is Called Failing and Poorly Financed. *The New York Times.*

Garcia-Reyes, K. 2020. Four dimensions of drug trafficking violence in Mexico: How perpetrators perceive them*? CONfines de Relaciones Internacionales y Ciencia Política* 16 (31): 33–60.

Gerber, J. and Jensen, E.L., 2001. The internationalization of US policy on illicit drug control. In Gerber, J. and Jensen, E.L. (eds.). *Drug War American Style*. Routledge, 1-18.

Gogoleva, V., Kuznetsova, T., Petrov, A. and Smirnov, I. 2023. Prospects for the use of Arctic routes in the context of climate change and the implementation of the concept of sustainable development of the Arctic zone. *E3S Web of Conferences*, 378: 6014.

Gottschalk, M., 2023. The opioid crisis: the war on drugs is over. Long live the war on drugs. *Annual review of criminology*, 6(1): 363-398.

Government of Iceland, 2025. Arctic Security Policy Roundtable held in Iceland, 24 May. https://www.government.is/diplomatic-missions/embassy-article/2025/05/24/Arctic-Security-Policy-Roundtable-held-in-Iceland/ (Accessed 2025-06-25).

Gunnlaugsson, H. and Galliher, J.F. 1995. The secret drug police of Iceland. In *Undercover Police Surveillance in Comparative Perspective* Brill Nijhoff: 235-247.

Gunnlaugsson, H. and Galliher, J.F. 2000. *Wayward Icelanders: Punishment, Boundary Maintenance, and the Creation of Crime*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Gunnlaugsson, H. 2001. Going Public with Social Science: Crime and Criminal Justice Policy in Iceland. *Social Problems*, 48(1): 88–92.

Gunnlaugsson, H. 2021a. Drug Controls in Iceland: Any Retreat in Sight? In Tham, H. (ed.) *Retreat or Entrenchment? Drug Policies in the Nordic Countries at a Crossroads*. Stockholm: Stockholm University Press: 64–105.

Gunnlaugsson, H. 2021b. Criminal justice in a small Nordic country: The case of Iceland. *Nordisk Tidsskrift for Kriminalvidenskab* (Nordic Journal of Criminology)(1): 27–45.

Hafstað, V. 2020. Seven-year sentence for smuggling drugs [Sjö ára dómur fyrir fíkniefnasmygl]'*, Iceland Monitor*. 11 February. https://icelandmonitor.mbl.is/news/news/2020/02/11/seven_year_sentence_for_smuggling_drugs/ (Accessed 2025-09-08).

Helgason, S. 2021. Brutal murder shocks Iceland, prompts government to focus on organized crime. *Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime* https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/iceland-organized-crime-beqiri-murder/ (Accessed 2025-09-08).

Hernandez Roy, C., Bledsoe, R. and Cerén, A.M. 2023. Tracking Transatlantic Drug Flows: Cocaine's Path from South America across the Caribbean to Europe', *CSIS Features*, 19 September. https://features.csis.org/tracking-transatlantic-drug-flows-cocaines-path-from-south-america-across-the-caribbean-to-europe/index.html#group-section-i-3cS86JVPtl (Accessed 2024-06-24).

Hesterman, J.L. 2013. *The Terrorist Criminal Nexus: An Alliance of International Drug Cartels, Organized Crime, and Terror Groups.* Boca Raton, FL: Taylor & Francis.

Hobbs, D. 1995. *Bad Business: Professional Crime in Modern Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hobbs, D., Hadfield, P., Lister, S. and Winlow, S. 2012. A Bog of Conspiracy: The Institutional Evolution of Organized Crime in the UK. In Allum, F. and Gilmour, S. (eds*) Routledge Handbook of Transnational Organized Crime.* London: Routledge: 250–262.

Hobbs, D. and Antonopoulos, G.A. 2013. Endemic to the species: ordering the 'other' via organised crime. *Global Crime*, 14(1): 27–51.
Humphreys, B., 2023. The Nordic carceral system: Examining Scandinavian penal exceptionalism. *Nordic Review of International Studies*, (2).
Husain, T. 2024. Unveiling the failure: a comprehensive analysis of Bangladesh's war on drugs. *Journal of criminological research, policy and practice*. 10 (3/4), 166–179.
Iceland 1940 General Penal Code, No. 19 of 12 February 1940, s.173. https://www.government.is/library/04-Legislation/General%20Penal%20Code%20No%2019%201940.pdf (Accessed 2025-09-08).
Iceland 1974 Narcotics Act, No. 65 of 21 May 1974. Acts of Law Collection, Vol. 139b. https://www.government.is/library/Files/Narcotics%20Act_65_1974.pdf (Accessed 2025-09-08).
Iceland 2001 Regulation on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and other controlled substances, No. 233/2001. Reykjavik: Government of Iceland.
Iceland 2025 Legislative Bill amending the Act on Icelandic Citizenship, No. 100/1952 (Deprivation of Citizenship). 156th Legislative Session 2025, Session Document 71 — Item 71. https://www.althingi.is/altext/156/s/0071.html (Accessed 2025-02-25).
Iceland Monitor. 2025 n.a. Icelandic police join major Europol operation against organized crime. 13 May. https://icelandmonitor.mbl.is/news/news/2025/05/13/icelandic_police_join_major_europol_operation_again/ (Accessed 2025-06-24).
Iceland Review. 2017. Drugs Discovered aboard Polar Nanoq. 19 January.
Institute for Economics & Peace. 2025. *Global Peace Index 2025: Identifying and Measuring the Factors That Drive Peace.* Sydney: Institute for Economics & Peace, June 2025. https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/GPI-2025-web.pdf (Accessed 2026-02-27).
INTERPOL (n.a.) *Organized Crime.* https://www.interpol.int/Crimes/Organized-crime (Accessed 2024-06-20).
International Narcotics Control Board (INCB). 2014. Mission to Iceland, 25–27 March 2014. INCB News and Media. https://www.incb.org/incb/en/news/missions/missions2014/mission-to-iceland.html (Accessed 2025-09-08).
International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) 2014. Annual Report. Vienna: United Nations. https://www.incb.org/incb/en/news/AR2014/annual_report_2014.html (Accessed 2025-09-08).
International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) 2022. Annual Report.

https://www.incb.org/documents/Publications/AnnualReports/AR2022/Annual_Report/E_INCB_2022_1_eng.pdf (Accessed 2023-09-01).
International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) 2024. Annual Report. https://www.incb.org/documents/Publications/AnnualReports/AR2024/Annual_Report/E-INCB-2024-1-ENG.pdf (Accessed 2025-09-08).
International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) 2023. Precursors Report. https://www.incb.org/incb/en/precursors/technical_reports/precursors-technical-reports.html (Accessed 2025-02-25).
International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) 2023. Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2023: Chapter III Analysis of the world situation. E/INCB/2023/1. New York: United Nations: 92.
International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) Technical Publications. https://www.incb.org/incb/en/publications/technical-reports.html (Accessed 2025-02-25).
International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) INCB Publications. https://www.incb.org/incb/en/publications/incb-publications.html (Accessed 2025-03-03).
Jakobsson, T.E., 2005. Climate Change and the Northern Sea Route: An Icelandic Perspective. *International Energy Policy, the Arctic and the Law of the Sea*: 285.
Jojarth, C. 2009. *Crime, war, and global trafficking: designing international cooperation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Kabra, S. and Gori, S. 2023. Drug trafficking on cryptomarkets and the role of organized crime groups*. Journal of Economic Criminology*, 2100026.
Kjartansson, K. 2022. Boðar stríð gegn skipulagðri brotastarfsemi [Declares war on organized crime]. *Vísir*. 21 November. https://www.visir.is/g/20222341672d/bodar-strid-gegn-skipu-lagdri-brota-starf-semi (Accessed 2025-09-08).
Kloppe-Santamaria, G. 2022 Mexico's Long War on Drugs: Past and Present Failures of a Punitive Approach to Drugs*. Journal of illicit economies and development* 4 (2): 223–229.
Koram, K., 2022. Drug prohibition and the policing of warfare: The war on drugs, globalization, and the moralization of perpetual violence. *International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 13(1): 22-39.
Krajewski, K., 1999. How flexible are the United Nations drug conventions?. *International Journal of Drug Policy* 10(4): 329-338.
Kristjánsson, Á.L., James, J.E., Allegrante, J.P., Sigfúsdóttir, I.D. and Helgason, Á.R. 2010. Adolescent substance use, parental monitoring, and leisure time activities: 12-year outcomes of primary prevention in Iceland. *Preventive Medicine* 51(2): 168–171.
Kristjánsson, Á.L., Sigfúsdóttir, I.D., Thorlindsson, T., Mann, M.J. and Sigfusson, J. 2016. Population trends in smoking, alcohol use and primary prevention

variables among adolescents in Iceland, 1997–2014. *Addiction* 111(4): 645–652.
Kristjánsson, A.L., Mann, M.J., Sigfusson, J., Thorisdottir, I.E., Allegrante, J.P. and Sigfusdottir, I.D. 2020. Development and guiding principles of the Icelandic model for preventing adolescent substance use. *Health Promotion Practice* 21(1): 62–69.
Lappi-Seppälä, T. 2008. *Crime Prevention and Community Sanctions in Scandinavia.* Helsinki: National Research Institute of Legal Policy.
League of Nations 1912 International Opium Convention. The Hague, 23 January, Treaty Series, vol. 8, p. 187 Entry into force: 28 June 1919. https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/LON/Volume%208/v8.pdf (Accessed 2025-06-24).
Legac, S., 2010. The negative impacts of the global war on drugs: can international drug enforcement be successful without infringing on human rights. *Albany Government Law Review* 3: 823.
Levi, M. 2014. Thinking about Organised Crime: Structure and Threat. *The RUSI Journal* 159(1): 6–14.
Löve, A.S.C., Ásgrímsson, V. and Ólafsdóttir, K. 2022. Illicit drug use in Reykjavik by wastewater based epidemiology. *The Science of the Total Environment* 803.
Magnússon, A. 2021. Raise arms against criminal groups [Skera upp herör gegn glæpahópum], *Morgunblaðið,* 26 February. https://www.mbl.is/frettir/innlent/2021/02/26/skera_upp_heror_gegn_glaepahopum/ (Accessed 2025-09-08).
Marshall, I.H., Anjewierden, O. and van Atteveld, H., 1990. Toward an "Americanization" of dutch drug policy? *Justice Quarterly* 7(2): 391-420.
McCoy, A.W. and Block, A.A. (eds.) 2021 *War on Drugs: Studies in the Failure of U.S. Narcotics Policy*. 1st edn. London and New York: Routledge.
Morris, S.D. 2013. Drug trafficking, corruption, and violence in Mexico: mapping the linkages. *Trends in Organized Crime* 16: 195–220.
Nordic Council of Ministers 2017. Nordic Minister Statement on Transnational Organized Fisheries Crime: Declaration from the meeting of MR FJLS adopted on the 28 June 2017.
Ólafsdóttir, H. 1985. Kriminalitetstendenser i Island (Criminal tendencies in Iceland). *Nordisk Tidsskrift for Kriminalvidenskab* 72(2): 81–100.
Ólafsdóttir, H. and Bragadóttir, R. 2006. Crime and Criminal Policy in Iceland: Criminology on the Margins of Europe. *European Journal of Criminology* 4(3): 221–253.
Pakes, F. 2023. Out in the cold? The experiences of foreign national prisoners in Iceland's open prisons. *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice* 75.
Paoli, L. 210. What is the link between organized crime and drug trafficking. *Rausch*, 6(4): 181–189.

Parkash, D. 2025. Arctic as a new geopolitical hotspot. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research* 7(2).
Peters, G. and Wooley, J. T. 1971. Richard Nixon: Remarks About an Intensified Program for Drug Abuse Prevention and Control. *The American Presidency Project*. http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=3047 (Accessed 2026-03-02).
Phillips, T. 2025. Top Biden-era official warns US could stumble into "disastrous" intervention in Venezuela. *The Guardian.* 3 September. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/sep/03/us-military-venezuela-strike-guerrilla-war (Accessed 2025-09-08).
Planet Youth (n.d.) The Icelandic Prevention Model. Reykjavík: Planet Youth. https://planetyouth.org/the-icelandic-prevention-model/ (Accessed 2026-0202).
Þórisdóttir, R. and Gunnlaugsson, H. 2010. The low crime thesis examined in Iceland: Criminal victimization in comparative perspective. *International Journal of Circumpolar Socio-Cultural Issues* 4: 7–27.
Raineri, L. and Strazzari, F. 2023. The data that we do (not) have: studying drug trafficking and organised crime in Africa. *Trends in Organized Crime* 26(4): 358–378.
Rannveig Þórisdóttir and Gunnlaugsson, H. 2010. The low crime thesis examined in Iceland: Criminal victimization in comparative perspective. *International Association of Circumpolar Sociocultural Issues* 4.
Ramos Horta, J. and Tinasti, K. 2020. The World Drug Policy Problem. An Interview with José Ramos Horta. In Tinasti, K., Buxton, J. and Chinery Hesse, M. (eds) *Drug Policies and Development: Conflict and Coexistence*. Leiden: Brill: 172–180.
Regilme Jr, S.S.F., 2021. Visions of peace amidst a human rights crisis: War on drugs in Colombia and the Philippines. *Journal of Global Security Studies* 6(2).
Regilme, S.S., 2023. State violence in narcotic drug governance: A call for harm reduction and human rights protection. *Journal of Perpetrator Research* 5(1).
Regilme, S.S., 2025. The global war on drugs: militarism and its human rights consequences. *Critical Sociology.* https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/08969205251364102 (Accessed 2026-06-02).
Rippeth, T.P. and Fine, E.C. 2022. Turbulent Mixing in a Changing Arctic Ocean. *Oceanography* 35(3/4): 66–75.
Sudan, H. K. et al. 2023. Decrypting the cryptomarkets: Trends over a decade of the Dark Web drug trade. *Drug science, policy and law*. 9.
Shelley, L. 2012. The relationship of drug and human trafficking: A global perspective. *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research* 18: 241–253.
Sheptycki, J. 2003. Against transnational organised crime. In Beare. M. (ed.) *Critical Reflections on Transnational Organised Crime, Money Laundering and Corruption*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press: 120–144.

Shestak, V.A. and Tsyplakova, A.D. 2023. Icelandic prevention model. Journal of Siberian Federal University. *Humanities & Social Sciences* 16(5).
Shuldiner, H. 2025. What Iceland's cocaine surge says about Europe's saturated drug market. *Insight Crime* 18 June. https://insightcrime.org/news/what-icelands-cocaine-surge-says-about-europes-saturated-drug-market/ (Accessed 2025-06-04).
Sigvaldason, K., Helgadottir, S., Jonsson, H. and Bjornsson, S. 2014. Injecting drug abuse: survival after intensive care admission and forensic toxicology reports at death, *Laeknabladid* 100(10): 515–519.
Skinner, W.F. 1986. Delinquency, Crime, and Development: A Case Study of Iceland. *The Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 23(3): 268–294.
Small, D. & Drucker, E. 2008. Return to Galileo? The Inquisition of the International Narcotic Control Board. *Harm reduction journal* 5 (1): 16.
Smith, D.C. 1991. Wickersham to Sutherland to Katzenbach: Evolving an "official" definition for organized crime. *Crime, Law and Social Change* 16(2): 135–154.
Söholt, C.V.L., 2024. Local drug consumption and drug policies in Iceland. MA Thesis in Criminology, University of Iceland. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://skemman.is/bitstream/1946/48495/1/Local%20drug%20consumption%20and%20drug%20policies%20in%20Iceland.pdf (Accessed 2026-06-02).
Stenger, W. 2024. Completing the Nordic NATO Jigsaw. *Scandinavian review* 111 (1): 34–46.
Stewart, D. P. 1990. Internationalizing the War on Drugs: The UN Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. *Denver Journal of International Law and Policy* 18(3): 387.
The White House (2025) National Security Strategy of the United States of America, November 2025. https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/2025-National-Security-Strategy.pdf (Accessed 2026--2-04).
Trebach, A. (1982) *The Heroin Solution*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 237.
Thorsson, E. 2025. Iceland pledges stronger role in NATO with focus on Arctic security. *Arctic Today* 28 May. https://www.arctictoday.com/iceland-pledges-stronger-role-in-nato-with-focus-on-arctic-security/ (Accessed 2025-06-25).
Tómas, R. 2025. Iceland steps up efforts against organised crime. *Iceland Review.* 26 March. https://www.icelandreview.com/news/iceland-steps-up-efforts-against-organised-crime/?srsltid=AfmBOopT4Twb9kK8RzP37eLpGFXzOmTQRC5VfDthg2s0s_d_8OC9BNbt (Accessed 2025-06-25).

Träskman, P. 2005. Drug control and drug offences in the Nordic countries: A criminal political failure too often interpreted as a success*. Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Preventio* 5(2): 36-256.
Tyrie, O. 2021. Two men await trial for smuggling cocaine into Iceland [Tveir menn bíða réttarhalda fyrir smygl á kókaíni til Íslands]. *The Reykjavík Grapevine* 4 February. https://grapevine.is/news/2021/02/04/two-men-await-trail-for-smuggling-cocaine-into-iceland/ (Accessed 2025 -09- 08).
United Nations 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961, as amended by the 1972 Protocol Amending the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961. United Nations Treaty Series, vol. 976: 105.
United Nations 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances. United Nations Treaty Series, vol. 1019: 175.
United Nations 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. United Nations Treaty Series, vol. 1582: 95.
United Nations 2000 United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. United Nations Treaty Series, vol. 2225, p. 209.
United Nations General Assembly 1994. Naples Political Declaration and Global Action Plan against Organized Transnational Crime: resolution adopted by the General Assembly, 23 December 1994 A/RES/49/159. New York: United Nations.
United Nations General Assembly 2015. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: resolution adopted by the General Assembly, 25 September 2015, A/RES/70/1. New York: United Nations.
United Nations General Assembly 2024. International Day for the Prevention of and Fight against All Forms of Transnational Organized Crime: resolution adopted by the General Assembly, 21 March 2024 A/RES/78/267. New York: United Nations.
United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner 2023. UN experts call for end to global "war on drugs". *Press release* 23 June. https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/06/un-experts-call-end-global-war-drugs (Accessed 2024-06-20.
United Nations International Maritime Organization (IMO) 2006 Resolution MSC.228(82): Revised guidelines for the prevention and suppression of the smuggling of drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals on ships engaged in international maritime traffic, 7 December.
United Nations News 2024. Transnational organised crime: "It's time we pull together to push back". *UNODC* 14 November. https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/11/1156981 (Accessed 2025-0729).
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) 2025 *World Drug Report 2025: Executive Summary, Policy Implications.*

https://www.unodc.org/unodc/data-and-analysis/world-drug-report-2025.html (Accessed 2026-03-01).

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) 2023. *World Wildlife Crime Report 2020: Trafficking in Protected Species* https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/wildlife/2020/World_Wildlife_Report_2020_9July.pdf (Accessed 2024-06-23).

United Nations Police Services (n.d.) Serious and organized crime. https://police.un.org/en/serious-and-organized-crime (Accessed 2026-03-01).

United Nations Security Council 2019. Transnational organized crime and drug trafficking in the Caribbean region as a threat to international stability: Open Arria Formula Meeting, 7 June. https://media.un.org/en/asset/k15/k15bofufuj (Accessed 2023-05-14).

U.S. Congress 1970 The Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970, Pub. L. 91–513, 84 Stat. 1236. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office.

U.S. Congress 1970 Organized Crime Control Act of 1970, Pub. L. 91–452, 84 Stat. 922. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office.

U.S. Department of State (n.d.) International Narcotics Control Strategy Reports https://www.state.gov/international-narcotics-control-strategy-reports/ (Accessed 2025-03-03).

U.S. Department of State, Overseas Security Advisory Council 2021. Iceland country security report. https://www.osac.gov/Content/Report/826a7d43-ac2d-4594-9345-1cf434200b1d (Accessed 2024-07-16).

U.S. Department of State, Overseas Security Advisory Council 2024. Iceland country security report, 12 August. https://www.osac.gov/Content/Report/826a7d43-ac2d-4594-9345-1cf434200b1d (Accessed 2025-09-08).

Valdimarsdóttir, M. and Bernburg, J.G. 2015. Community Disadvantage, Parental Network, and Commitment to Social Norms: Multilevel Study of Self-reported Delinquency in Iceland. *The Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 52 (2): 213–244.

Van Duyne, P.C. and Vander Beken, T., 2009. The incantations of the EU organised crime policy making. *Crime, Law and Social Change* 51(2): 261-281.

Duyne, V.P.C., 2019. The perspective of constructing and organising crime in Europe: an introduction. In van Duyne, P.C., Serdyuk, A., Antonopoulos, G.A. and Harvey, J.H. (eds.) *Constructing and Organising Crime in Europe*. The Hague: Eleven International Publishing.

Van Uhm, D., South, N. and Wyatt, T. 2021. Connections between trades and trafficking in wildlife and drugs. *Trends in Organized Crime* 24(4): 425–446.

Von Hofer, H. 2011. Punishment and crime in Scandinavia, 1750–2008. *Crime and Justice* 40(1): 33–107.
Walt, S.M. 1991. The Renaissance of Security Studies. *International Studies Quarterly* 35(2): 211–239.
Vilhjálmsson, I.F. 2019. An Icelandic Fishing Company Bribed Officials in Namibia and Used Norway's Largest Bank to Transfer 70 Million Dollars to a Tax Haven. *Stundin* 12 November. https://stundin.is/grein/9920/ [Accessed 2025-09-08).
Williams, P. and Savona, E. 1996. *The United Nations and Transnational Organized Crime*. Cass.
Woodiwiss, M. 2000. *Organized Crime and American Power: A History.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
Woodiwiss, M. 2017. *Double Crossed: The Failure of Organized Crime Control.* London: Pluto Press.
Woodiwiss, M., & Young, M. 2021. The past and present of transnational organized crime in America. In F. Allum, & S. Gilmour (eds.) *The Routledge Handbook of Transnational Organized Crime*. (Second). Routledge: 90-140.
World Population Review 2025a Safest countries in the world 2025. https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/safest-countries-in-the-world (Accessed 2025-06-23).
World Population Review (2025b) Crime rate by country 2025. https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/crime-rate-by-country (Accessed 2025-06-25).
Young, M., 2014. Dirty money in Jamaica. *Journal of Money Laundering Control* 17(3): 355-366.
Young, M., and Woodiwiss, M. 2019 Organised crime and security threats in Caribbean Small Island Developing States: A critical analysis of US assumptions and policies. *European Review of Organised Crime* 5(1): 85–117.
Zharovska, H. 2020. Transnational organized crime as a destructive phenomenon of globalization. *Law Review of Kyiv University of Law* (2): 354–360.
Zubenko, I. 2025. Proposal to strip convicted criminals of Icelandic citizenship [Tillaga um að svipta dæmda glæpamenn íslenskum ríkisborgararétti]. *The Reykjavík Grapevine* 19 February. https://grapevine.is/news/2025/02/19/proposal-to-strip-convicted-criminals-of-icelandic-citizenship/ (Accessed 2025-02-25).

Notes on contributor

Dr Mary Alice Young: Associate Professor of Organised Crime at the University of the West of England. Head of the Global Crime, Justice and Security Research Group, and the Research Hub on Small States and Territories. Dr Young focuses

on organised crime, financial crime and international crime-control law. Using socio-legal and historical approaches, she examines how transnational crime policies develop and affect different regions, particularly small states. She has collaborated with governments, law-enforcement agencies, and international organisations on crime and justice issues.