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COMMITTEE GUIDE

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CCBMUN **XXIII**

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1. Presidents' Letter

Dear Delegates,

The UN is an organisation focused on the wellbeing of society, discussing important matters relevant to the global population. In this version of CCBMUN, and as a part of the committee UNODC, you will engage in conversations that will open your eyes to the realities of the world we live in, and as delegates representing countries, you all have a unique opportunity to confront the challenges regarding illicit drugs, organised crime, corruption, and terrorism. These are complex issues that destabilise societies and target development worldwide.

We are Luciana Lozada and Sofia Rada, respectively 11th and 12th graders, and we will be your presidents for CCBMUN XXII. Our goal is to create an engaging, educational, and productive experience for all delegates who decide to join us. It is a true honour to share this experience with all of you.

Before we reach the days of the model, we genuinely encourage you all to read all the contents of the guide and prepare your documents. We also urge you to make an adequate investigation on the parliamentary procedure and language that we will be utilising, as it is of crucial importance. Now, when the day comes, and during the course of the model, we encourage you to engage in conscious dialogue, to actively participate in the debates, and to work together in a spirit of cooperation and diplomacy. Your diverse perspectives, innovative solutions, and dedication will be essential in reaching the committee's various objectives.

We understand and embrace the different backgrounds that you might have, the different experiences you may have had in prior MUNs, or the possibility that you might not have any experience. Regardless of your situation, we believe in your capabilities, and we are sure that you will do a great job, successfully taking on the roles as delegates.

Finally, we would like to emphasise that we are your support system. If you have any queries regarding anything related to the model, do not hesitate to contact us via the committee email address. We will be more than happy to help.

We are thrilled to have you in our committee and can't wait to meet you all. We look forward to seeing you in CCBMUN XXII!

Yours faithfully,
Luciana Lozada and Sofia Rada
Presidents of UNODC
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Topic 1: *Body packing as a means of smuggling illicit substances*

I. History/Context

An illicit substance is defined as, “one that is illegal to have” (2020). Illicit substances have been around for centuries, but they may not have been regarded as illicit when they were first consumed. Humans have had the desire to consume “illicit substances” since the beginning of time; as a matter of fact, mind-altering drug use has been common since ancient times, with evidence of cannabis use dating back to 3000 BCE. In Central Asia and China (2016). Numerous sources describe how products such as beer and berry wines were being consumed around 6000 BCE. Mead, an alcoholic beverage made from fermented honey, was being consumed around 8000 BCE, and opium was utilised by the ancient Sumerians in approximately 5000 BCE. (Escobedo, 2010; Faupel, Horowitz, & Weaver, 2010; Goodman, Sherratt, & Lovejoy, 2007).



Figure 1: Ancient Greeks used poppy juice, which contains opium (7.1 Drug Use in History, 2016)



19th century British satirical cartoon about the network of smuggling brought contraband supplies into Britain
Figure 2: Smuggling has been going on for centuries (Tea Smuggling, n.d.)

Smuggling is the illegal transportation of goods, materials, information, or persons over international borders, into or out of jails, or out of houses or other facilities where these did not initially belong, in defiance of applicable laws or other rules. This is a method used more recently for drug trafficking. The concept of smuggling arose, in the legal sense, as soon as regulations on trade were created globally and/or locally. Initially, it did not necessarily involve drugs. One of the earlier cases recorded can be traced

back to the 18th century, as tea taxation increased in as a result of the government's need to fund a war in Spain; in 1711, the price of a pound of tea leaves was 5s, which was, at the time, outrageous, and gave the tea smugglers a lot of motivation to operate. During the same time period, more tobacco, spices, silks, and liquors were smuggled into England than were brought in legally. Smuggling against the tobacco monopoly (a system implemented by various European colonial powers to control the production, distribution, and taxation of tobacco in their colonies) and the high salt tax also became a common use for smuggling in France around the same time. Regarding drug trafficking, and for some context, it was the European colonial forces of the 19th century, not the mafia, who started drug trafficking. During that time period, the pharmaceutical industry was finding new substances such as heroin, cocaine, and morphine and some governments were actively trading opium across Asia, where it was used for medicinal and recreational purposes. This led to a global epidemic of addiction. The earliest drug networks appeared in China, France, and Mexico when limitation was implemented at the start of the 20th century. Since then, smuggling has only become more prominent, and different strategies to do so have been invented, one of them being body packing.

Body packing is the practice of hiding illicit drugs within a person's body, particularly through ingestion, in order to smuggle them. During this practice, the person ingests meticulously packed drug packages to reduce risk of detection. A man was first discovered to have swallowed packages containing balloons packed with marijuana in 1973, marking the first known instance of body packing in the legal frame. Since then, and with the development of several other narcotics and hiding tactics, body packing has developed into a multifaceted method of drug trafficking. At the beginning stages of its modern existence (referring to its involvement in smuggling narcotics) , body packing mostly consisted of the ingestion of marijuana and other base narcotics, which were frequently swallowed as balloons or packages.

Now, when it comes to hiding illicit substances in one's body, body packing is not the only method utilised. Body stuffing, for example, is one of them. Body stuffing

is a drug hiding technique in which partakers quickly, and in a frequently unplanned manner, ingest drug packages. This behaviour is frequently linked to desperation and a lack of other means of avoiding being discovered by the authorities under specific circumstances. Compared to body packers, body stuffers usually consume fewer packets, and because the packets are sometimes improperly packaged or undone, there is a higher chance of overdosing. The medicines are typically ingested all at once, so the user might not be fully aware of how much or what kind of medications they are ingesting.

Another similar practice is body pushing, which, as the word suggests, involves the pushing of illicit substances through one's private areas, say, for example, vagina or rectum. This technique is frequently preferred instead of body stuffing because it can hide bigger amounts of drugs easily. Also, the risk of overdose is lower in case a packet leaks or ruptures. Pushers might place more than one packet at a time into their bodies; these packets, similar to the ones used by body packers, are usually more tightly wrapped than those used for body stuffers.

Between 1973 and the 2000s, the world saw a sudden increase in the cases of body packers, especially in the United States. For example, one of the oldest cases recorded was in 1981, when ten victims passed away after ingesting cocaine packets in an attempt to evade being discovered by US Customs authorities. Among these ten “body packers”, two of them were found dead in a hotel room, three were found during a customs inspection, one had polydipsia, one was found unconscious in a taxi, and one was a self-admission to a nearby hospital. (Steven A. Koehler et al., 2004) . Another clear example of the clear growth in cases of body packers are the 50 deaths from body packers registered only in New York from 1990 to 2001. The majority (37/50) of deaths were caused by intoxications due to open or leaking drug packets in the gastrointestinal tract. The number of packets recovered from each individual ranged from 1 to 111 (Ten years of “Body packers” in New York City: 50 deaths, 2002).

Latin America

Body packing most likely began in Latin America due to the need for innovative techniques for trafficking, particularly with regard to cocaine. Distributors from South America, the Caribbean, and Central America frequently used aviation to ship illegal goods to Europe. The US air interdiction programme (1980–2001) was established with the goal of addressing this problem. However, it unwittingly moved the cocaine business from Peru to Colombia, expanding the routes and techniques used for drug smuggling. The US first banned aircrafts carrying coca leaf or paste to Columbia laboratories, but this strategy was ineffective until cocaine manufacture was moved there and smuggling started to become a more popular means of trafficking. Incidents



Figure 2: Medellín Cartel in 1988 (Rennell, 2019)

concerning aviation decreased around 2008, which may indicate that traffickers found new ways to get beyond border authorities. Aviation and naval trafficking routes may have sent tons of produce to Europe, and smuggling would send much lesser volumes, but the fear of being seized and prosecuted must have compelled the creation of more modest smuggling techniques, most likely including body packing. (O'Hagan, 2016)

A new era in drug trafficking began with the rise of drug cartels like the Medellín cartel in Colombia, as demand for drugs, especially cocaine, skyrocketed in the United States and Europe. Body packing became a preferred method of drug smuggling, especially in countries like Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia, these countries were full of political instability, which made them ideal environments for the growth of organised crime and drug trafficking. The historical rise of body packing and other drug smuggling techniques in Latin America can be attributed to the region's open borders, dishonest law enforcement, and dearth of efficient drug

interdiction measures. The region's high drug trafficking volume, combined with law enforcement organisations' insufficient resources, made it difficult to identify and seize drugs that were packaged in bodies. The detecting of such illicit substances being trafficked was also further complicated by the fact that, at the time, and due to the unfortunate circumstances the region was going through, detection tools like trained dogs or x-ray had not yet been put into practice, giving traffickers a higher chance of success.

Background

Body packers or drug mules are typically not introduced into these systems by genuine interest: instead, they are often coerced into the situation through a complex form of manipulation, which takes advantage of their financial desperation. Many come from impoverished backgrounds or regions where poverty is rife, so the promise of money is enough to entice them; for those it can be a lifeline (or seeming opportunity) to save themselves or their families from debt. However, not everyone enters willingly - some are forced into participation as criminal organisations take advantage of vulnerable individuals using force, intimidation, or threats against them or their loved ones if they do not comply. Others are simply misled through deceit and unaware of what they are getting into, as they are told lies about the task at hand. Moreover, some get involved by personal connections, which, based on trust, leads them into such risky behaviour.

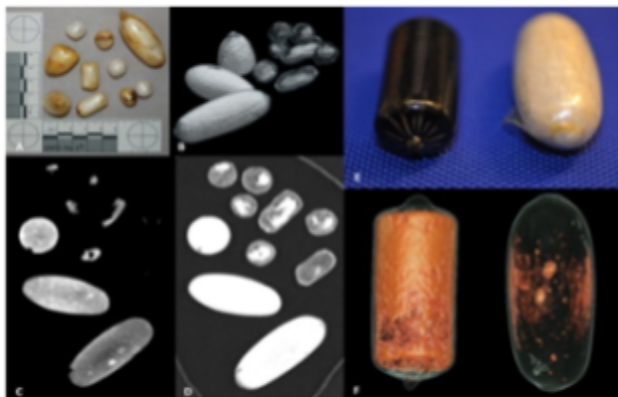


Figure 3: Internal cocaine packages (MedCrave 2015)

The majority of body packs were initially men, according to statistics. However, between 1989 and 1995, the proportion of female body packers increased from 15% to 19%. If this trend has continued for the last twenty years, then women may now make up 47% of all drug mules. (O'Hagan, 2016). Cocaine body packers often point to desperation

as their driving force, women specifically. According to a study on female body packers, the women involved were either in difficult financial circumstances, with kids to support, or in life-threatening circumstances like being kept at gunpoint until they accepted. The women in question were compelled by fiancés, boyfriends, or criminal groups connected to the tragedies of the women's families.

Health hazards

As is evident, neither body packing, pushing nor stuffing are anywhere near safe; they are in fact some of the most dangerous drug trafficking methods due to the complications they can have on the body. Medical problems caused by such smuggling techniques are associated with either packet rupture or the quantity/size of packets consumed. Small or substantial intestinal obstruction can result from ingesting relatively big foreign bodies and slowing down passage; this may be made worse by bowel perforation and subsequent peritonitis, a life-threatening infection of the abdominal cavity. Acute intoxication resulting from packet rupture is contingent upon the contents of the packets, the volume of spillage, and the prompt medical staff involvement (Shahnazi et al., 2011). Data show that a significant portion of body packers consume numerous packets, which, if not adequately controlled, might result in serious gastrointestinal problems. For example, research found that complications from drug leaks or surgical procedures accounted for 2.7% of the mortality of body packers (Hajinasrollah E; Zamani A; Mirhashemi H; Oshidary B; Soori M; Rashnoo F; Peyvandi H; Shahrabaf MA;). The presence of law enforcement in these cases exacerbates the ethical issues faced by healthcare providers and may impede the provision of adequate medical care (World Health Organization).

Drug overdose is another serious consequence of these methods, by ingesting or pushing these illicit substances and not being careful enough with the packaging of them, they might rupture, running the risk of being released into the bloodstream too soon after ingestion or implantation, which could result in an overdose, causing respiratory depression, coma, and even death. Depending on the substance ingested, an overdose could result in drowsiness, disorientation,

slow or irregular breathing, choking sounds, bluish lips or fingertips, and unresponsiveness. Generally, in the event of an overdose, medical attention must be given immediately in order to remove the drug from the body, offer supportive care, and administer antidotes if they are available. However, in the specific case of body packing, accepting medical assistance is clearly harder, as it involves being discovered and facing legal consequences.

II. Current Situation

Case Study

As it has been widely known, when a person participates in narcotrafficking, one of the methods they utilise is to swallow or introduce drugs such as opium, cocaine, cannabis and amphetamines in body cavities. This method has been known for over four decades. Although the phrase "body packing" was first used formally in 1973, there exist anecdotal reports from a decade earlier that describe similar instances that correspond with the notion of body packing, and are recognised in the medical literature. Body stuffing is a separate clinical entity from body packing. Robert et al. noted the discrepancy for the first time in 1985. Body stuffing is the term for the rapid consumption of ill-sealed packages containing illegal narcotics out of fear of being arrested. This practice frequently results in an acute clinical picture due to drug leaking and packet breakage.

It may seem unbelievable, but these body packers are able to sustain a capacity of 1 kg of drugs, that are packed into small packs that are able to be swallowed and ejected easily once their purpose has been accomplished. For instance, the materials that tend to be used to pack these drugs vary from: condoms, plastic bags, capsules, latex gloves, or balloons.

However, there can be many complications or side effects after this when the drugs have not been sealed correctly, or the packages begin to disintegrate because of the gastric acids. In this particular case, a 30-year-old male participated in heroin body-packing which caused bowel obstruction. This patient was brought from the prison to the emergency department because he was complaining of abdominal pain. However, the physicians noticed that although there weren't any obvious signs of drug toxicity, his abdomen was rigid, which is why they took an abdominal computed tomography (CT) scan which showed ingested packets in the stomach as well as in the patient's small intestine. The patient was immediately taken into surgery where he underwent a laparotomy, gastrotomy, and enterotomy. In the span of 2 hours, 13 packages, each weighing 45 grams, were extracted. In this case the patient was fortunate as none of the packages were ruptured which allowed the patient to recuperate in a short time span, and to be successfully discharged only three days after his surgery. Following the discovery of any packages ingested or introduced the patients are required to be monitored in case of any sudden changes in their condition, and to enable early treatment, and removal or assistance in expulsion of drug packets from the body. The easiest way to find the presence of drug packets is radiography, because it shows the entirety of the abdomen area as well as any strange objects. (SCARE, 2020)



Figure 4: Evidence of body packing (Pazin-Filho, 2013)

Body packers, sometimes referred to as “swallowers”, “internal carriers”, or “mules”, are important players in the world of drug smuggling. One of the substances most often recovered from body packers globally is heroin. Whereas cocaine and stimulant-induced drug poisoning can cause mydriasis, hypertension, agitation, altered mental status, diaphoresis, and tachycardia, opioid drug toxicity, such as that caused by metacetyl-morphine, can manifest as reduced mental status, contracted pupils, and decreased bowel sounds. There are serious risks to

the health and safety of body packers from these negative effects. Unfortunately, body packers frequently wait to seek medical assistance until serious symptoms have shown out of fear of legal repercussions and possible indictment. Delays in getting prompt medical attention increase the risks and difficulties related to their disease.

Legal consequences

Body packing, pushing and stuffing, have led to numerous arrests and convictions worldwide. Many countries possess broad drug trafficking laws that cover all means of trafficking illegal substances, which would also include body packing. The statutes adopted do not separate the ways of transportation, but concentrate on the crime of trafficking itself. For example, the United States and the European Union have stringent anti-trafficking charges applied to body packers through the same laws used for any other trafficker.

Every legal system is different, however, as most of these crimes do end up being judged as drug trafficking; the length of sentences given is normally defined by the aggravating factors, which, in most countries, specifically in Colombia, include factors like if the person has committed the crime several times before, if they had any motives for committing the crime, and if they are helpful in the process of finding the origins of the drugs. (Código Penal Artículo 376. Trafico, Fabricacion o Porte de Estupefacientes)

Dilemma

Body packing can be done in a simple or sophisticated way to ensure a successful transfer or concealment of the drug with minimal risk to the packer. Different drugs such as cocaine and heroin are the most common. However, there are certain issues: Most countries do not have legislation in place to mandate reporting body packers, which means that many times attending physicians make the decision whether to report the incident to the police. These doctors may have

mixed views about informing the authorities. Also it is believed that in the absence of a credible threat of violence, it is insufficient reason to override patient–physician confidentiality on the basis of the crime committed.

The use of body packing to conceal and transport illegal drugs is a lucrative criminal enterprise attracting criminals worldwide. Europe in particular has become a major destination market for cocaine and heroin transported via this method, with strategic locations like Italy and Switzerland serving as key entry points. Drug trafficking organisations have developed extensive international networks through the UNODC such as the Eurojust, IberRed and Commonwealth Network of Contact Persons, making it extremely difficult to quantify the scale of the body-packing trade. With low arrest rates, the true magnitude of this problem remains largely hidden.

Researchers have begun to investigate the complex medico-legal issues surrounding body packing. A recent Swiss study highlighted the conflicting priorities between medical personnel and law enforcement when dealing with suspected body packers. Key concerns include radiation exposure from screening, body packers' tactics to evade detection, the consequences of false positive/negative findings, reporting requirements, and the safety risks to healthcare workers.

Significant legal ambiguities exist across countries regarding the use of medical imaging and the obligations of clinicians. While some jurisdictions require informed consent, others allow scans at the request of authorities. International frameworks, such as Euratom guidelines, provide limited clarity, as distinguishing true "medico-legal" exposures from medical ones is challenging in practice. Another dilemma is whether the potential benefits of detecting concealed drugs justify the radiation exposure, given the low risk of package rupture. This raises doubts about the appropriateness of current medico-legal exposure protocols.

Body packers also employ increasingly sophisticated concealment methods, further complicating detection. False negatives allow successful drug deliveries,

while false positives raise ethical issues and incur unnecessary costs. The lack of clear legislation is particularly problematic in regions with rampant body packing, forcing clinicians to navigate reporting decisions based on their own ethical stances. Disturbingly, traffickers have been able to coerce some doctors into not alerting authorities. In light of these complex, cross-border challenges, there is an urgent need for coordinated international action to develop consistent standards and legislation to address the medico-legal aspects of body packing. Improving clinician awareness and expanding research in this area are also critical steps forward.

III. Key points of the debate

- Ensuring protection for “easy targets” in vulnerable populations.
- Procedural agreements: Balance between health and law priorities when dealing with a body packing situation.
- Detection and screening methods
- Addressing legal ambiguities and establishing clear legal frameworks
- Mechanisms for improved international cooperation, intelligence sharing, and joint operations to disrupt trafficking networks
- Which laws have been implemented to ensure that the rights of all actors involved are being abided and their social backgrounds taken into account.
- Prevention and education to bring awareness to the health risks and complications that partaking in these acts can result in.



IV. Guiding questions

1. What policies and measures has your country implemented to combat the production and trafficking of illicit substances that are smuggled through body packing?
2. How does your country address the social and economic factors that contribute to the involvement of its citizens in drug production and trafficking?
3. What initiatives and measures has your country undertaken to collaborate with neighbouring nations to prevent the cross-border smuggling of illicit substances through body packing?
4. What international partnerships and agreements has your country engaged in to address the transnational nature of body packing and illicit substance smuggling?
5. What measures has your country taken to reduce the demand for illicit substances, thereby impacting the practice of body packing and smuggling?
6. How does your country ensure the protection of human rights and dignity while combating body packing and illicit substance smuggling?

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Topic 2: Combating Waste Traffic

I. History/Context

The illicit transportation and dumping of dangerous waste has been an environmental and public health threat across continents for many years. The type of waste and methods of dumping change over time. A broad definition of illegal waste activities is, *“Any movement of waste which is not in accordance with environmental regulations”* (Tompson and Chainey 2011). Illegal management and trafficking are among these operations, and they can take place both locally and abroad; such waste can be transported domestically/internally, within a country, or internationally between different nations. Waste is typically transported internationally from developed to developing nations, where laws are vague and waste can sometimes be sold as fake secondhand goods. While this illicit industry poses serious threats to the environment and public health, it also yields substantial income, estimated to be in the billions of dollars annually.

Waste trafficking had its origins around the years following World War II, when industrialisation, coupled with an almost meteoric rise in economic stability, gave rise to a level of waste production that had never before been seen. At this time there was a lack of stringent regulations and an absence of public awareness about the impact disposal has on the environment and health, and this was the start of illegal waste trafficking.



Figure 1: The Khian Sea cargo ship(Vista al Mar, 2022)

The Khian Sea event was one of the early cases that got international attention to waste trafficking. The cargo ship Khian Sea, registered in Liberia in 1986, was carrying over 14,000 tons of incinerator ash from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The ship wandered for months trying to locate a place where

they could dispose of the waste, however, many countries refused to take it. In January 1988, the crew finally dumped around 4,000 tons of ash in Haiti, telling the government it was topsoil fertiliser. However when the Haitian government found out about the nature of the alleged “fertiliser” they ordered it to be reloaded, but the ship slipped away and later illegally dumped about 10,000 tons into the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

In developed/industrialised nations, regulations against the dumping of hazardous wastes started to appear. This happened during the 1970s and 1980s, years of increasing environmental awareness and establishing of environmental regulations in the industrialised world. This has been described as the ‘Not In My Back Yard’ (NIMBY) syndrome, which reflected an increasing community resistance to siting of hazardous waste dumps. Regardless of the reason behind it, the increasing cost of the disposal of hazardous waste was dramatic; between 1970 and 1978, the cost per ton of hazardous wastes increased 12 times. As community discontent grew, along with additional regulatory pressure, the price increased even further up. These dynamics encouraged a few waste disposal companies and governments to begin looking abroad for cheaper options, aiming for less developed nations in the global South or Eastern Europe, where environmental awareness was lacking and where regulations and their enforcement were inadequate or non-existent.



Figure 2: Basel Convention logo
(Genève Internationale, 2024)

After a series of incidents regarding waste management across international borders, the anti-waste trafficking laws and agreements came onto the international scene in the 1980s. The first agreement was in 1981, when it was included as one of three priority areas in the United Nations Environment Programme’s (UNEP) first Montevideo Programme on Environmental Law. Afterwards, during the Basel Convention in 1989, the exportation of hazardous waste

from developed nations to developing ones was banned in response to the widespread outrage caused by the 1980s discovery of dumps of toxic waste being transported from overseas to Africa and other developing countries. Regulations on proper management of waste materials were laid down by the convention. The Bamako Convention was more direct and thus came into being in 1991 with a sole purpose of prohibiting hazardous waste imports into Africa. These two agreements signified a turning point for the world's efforts towards curbing waste trafficking, as they acknowledged cross-border implications of the issue plus interdependence among different nations. This was an important step towards international cooperation in addressing environmental concerns.

The amount of waste traded increased by more than 500% in just 20 years, from 45.6 million tonnes to 222.6 million tonnes between 1992 and 2012! Between 1998 and 2009, the amount of waste shipped from the world to developing nations increased by 40%.

II. Current Situation

There has been a rising conflict regarding combating waste traffic since it is high-income countries that have been sending their waste abroad to be thrown away or recycled, and by doing so they're overpowering the developing world with much more plastic and hazardous materials. According to UN data, the global waste trade fails to account for "hidden" plastics in textiles, contaminated paper bales, and other categories, leading to a dramatic annual underestimate (1.8 million metric tons). This plastic tends to be sent from the EU, Japan, UK, and the USA to developing nations. The plastic exports signify public health and environmental risks to the communities impacted. *"Toxic chemicals from these plastics are poisoning communities,"* (Karlsson T. n.d). Waste exports of textiles and paper from all the regions therefore increase the amount of plastic waste by as much as 1.8 million metric tons per year - 1.3 million from paper bales and half a million from textiles.

Because of inadequate waste management, trash trafficking has a negative impact on both the environment and human health. Additionally, it affects trade and competition negatively, which disadvantages law-abiding firms, and it has an adverse effect on the economy, by diverting resources like tax income (UNODC, 2022). Criminals face few risks due to the intricacy of waste-related legislation, but they stand to earn large illicit earnings from this industry (UNODC, 2022). This is generally the case when there are limited resources available for monitoring, inspection, and enforcement. Different legal definitions and ambiguous standards make it more difficult to comprehend and implement waste legislation, which opens doors for illegal activity (UNODC, 2022).

To address these issues regarding the trafficking of waste, there has recently been a renewed commitment from the international community to prevent and combat crimes that affect the environment, including *“illicit trafficking in hazardous waste and other wastes”* (UNODC, 2022). The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) can assist Member States in implementing, promoting, and evaluating their own national laws in order to effectively address environmental crimes (UNODC, 2022).

In particular, the Organised Crime Branch and UNODC's Environment Team are working together to create a Legislative Guide on Waste Trafficking (UNODC, 2022). This guide provides example provisions and guidelines that can be tailored to local situations and current enforcement procedures, giving Member States an instrument to change or adopt laws to better address the difficulties posed by trash trafficking (UNODC, 2022). To combat trash trafficking between the EU and the region, a new effort called *“Unwaste: tackling waste trafficking to support a circular economy”* has been established in South East Asia (UNODC, 2022).

It is estimated that there are 8.2 billion people in the world which, as a consequence, results in an annual production of almost 10 billion tonnes of rubbish in various forms. International trade in waste is permitted as long as business dealings follow the guidelines established by the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal,

along with any extra national restrictions imposed by the Parties to the Convention. Given that cross-border movements with non-Parties are normally forbidden, the Convention, which has 187 Parties, has almost worldwide applicability.

For instance, China banned the importation of 24 categories of solid trash and scrap on January 1, 2018. These categories include scrap metal, plastic debris and electronic waste, all of which were previously processed by China's recycling facilities; over the previous 25 years, these facilities had handled about half of the world's recyclable waste. This measure was part of the government's efforts to improve the trash recycling system, along with other measures such as the promotion of domestic garbage sorting and the adoption of low-carbon, ecologically friendly lifestyles. This is in agreement with the preamble to the Basel Convention, which states that the best way to safeguard the environment and public health from the risks presented by waste is to reduce its production and/or destructive potential. Hazardous and other wastes should be disposed of as close to their place of origin as practical, provided that doing so complies with efficient and ecologically friendly management practices.

Data shows that China saw a fall in rubbish imports after the ban was put into place; in 2019, 13.49 million tonnes of solid waste were imported, a 39.8% drop from 2018. Garbage paper accounted for the majority of this garbage, with imports falling by 39.1% while imports of metal scraps decreased by 41.5%.

China's customs officials have long prioritised stopping the illegal garbage traffic. Customs stepped up enforcement measures to deal with the import of materials that did not fit the government's definition of recyclables as part of Operation Blue Sky, which took place between 2017 and 2020. 372 criminal cases involving the import of 761.8 thousand tonnes of rubbish were brought in 2019 in relation to waste trafficking. After that, this number decreased, falling by 22.6 percent and 50.88% annually, respectively, until the number of criminal cases reached 217 by 2020.

Furthermore, in 2009, China Customs, with the assistance of the Secretariat of the World Customs Organisation (WCO), launched Operation DEMETER, which galvanised the global customs community. This operation has been regularly organised since then, benefiting from the support of various international organisations, including the Secretariat of the Basel Convention and its Regional Centre in Beijing, INTERPOL, Europol, the European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (IMPEL), and the United Nations Environment Programme's Asia and the Pacific Office. In 2020, participating administrations reported 119 infringement incidents pertaining to the illicit movement of garbage and 12 cases pertaining to the illicit movement of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and ozone-depleting compounds during Operation Demeter VI.

Lately, Malaysia and Indonesia have become the main destinations for exports of waste from wealthy countries, both legal and illicit. The world's waste trade changed significantly in 2018 when China banned the import of rubbish, with most of the waste being sent to Southeast Asia instead. Due to a lack of infrastructure and support for sustainable waste management, illicit recycling plants, many of which are run by Chinese investors, have proliferated throughout Indonesia. These plants pollute local communities' water supplies and produce hazardous air pollution due to their low-tech operations and environmentally hazardous disposal techniques. Similarly, Malaysia has experienced an increase in illegal recycling facilities, many of which feature on-site incinerators to burn the leftover waste, worsening the effects on the local population's health and environmental wellbeing (Hinz, 2024).

The United States has begun exporting plastic garbage to countries in Latin America, such as Ecuador, El Salvador, and Mexico. Weak customs regulations, a weak recycling infrastructure, and dubious relationships between these nations' governments and recycling businesses frequently make this easier. According to data, the United States exported more than 200,000 tons of plastic waste to Latin America in 2020 and 2021, with Mexico receiving the greatest amount of this waste (Servindi, 2022).



Figure 3: The global north exports a lot of its toxic waste to the global south (Srinivasan, 2023)

The United Kingdom was the worst country in Europe for sending toxic electronic waste to developing nations such as Ghana and Thailand. In general, the global north exports 23% of its E-waste to the global south each year. In the European Union it is estimated that one third of all waste sent abroad is done illegally, making billions of dollars for organised crime. Much of

this waste is sent to Turkey, India and Egypt. Australia created one of the first waste export bans in 2020 in the Recycling and Waste Reduction Act. However, it was discovered that contaminated waste was still being sent to Thailand in 2022, and in 2024 the government decided not to charge a tax on exported waste under pressure from industry. This means that contaminated waste will continue to leave Australia by legal and illegal means, and little effort will be made to reduce and recycle in the country.

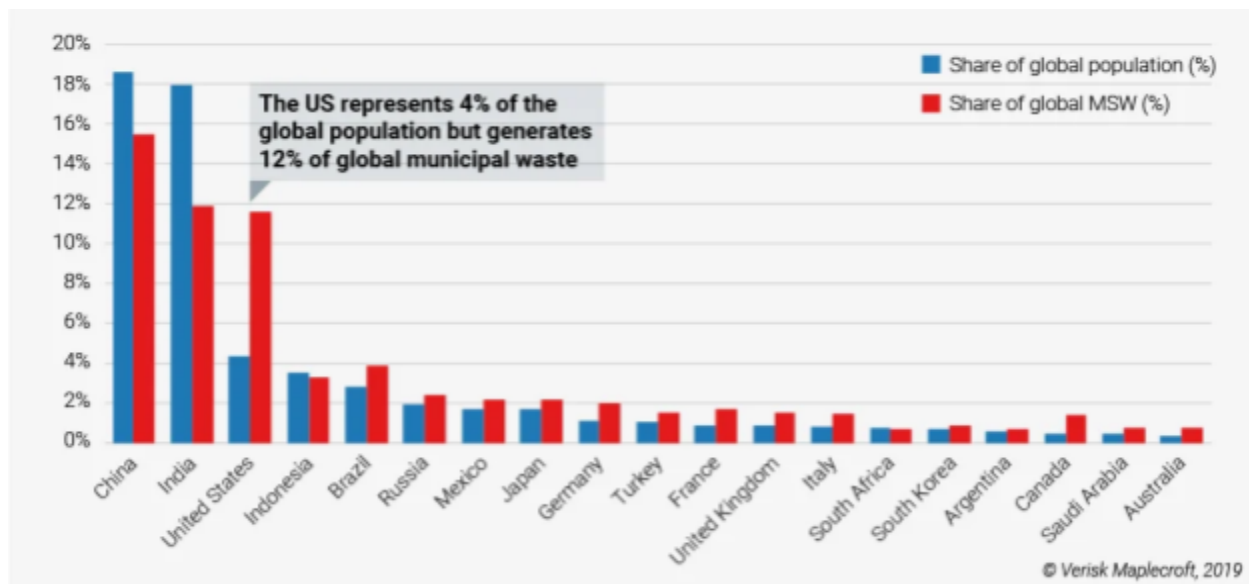


Figure 4: Share of global population and Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) for G20 countries (Smith, N, 2019)

III. Key points of the debate

- The role of developed nations in addressing the waste trafficking issue
- Nations' responsibility for the management and disposal of the waste they generate
- The effectiveness of international agreements and the need for stronger enforcement mechanisms
- The impact of waste trafficking on the environment and public health in affected countries
- Economic incentives and challenges faced by developing countries in managing waste imports
- The urgency of a global transition to sustainable waste management techniques and a circular economy in order to lower the total amount of waste produced and to prevent illicit trafficking
- Implementation of policies or law implementations that address the waste disposal to neighbouring countries, and the possible sanctions imposed on those who choose not to follow them.

IV. Guiding questions

1. What policies and measures has your country implemented to combat the production and export of hazardous waste, and how do these efforts align with international conventions and treaties?
2. What challenges does your country face in detecting and intercepting the transboundary movement of hazardous waste, and how does your country

collaborate with international organisations and neighbouring nations to address these challenges?

3. How does your country address the safe disposal and management of imported waste, and what measures are in place to prevent the illegal traffic of hazardous waste within your borders?
4. What specific challenges does your country face in enforcing laws against waste trafficking, and what technological advancements and training programmes have been adopted to enhance detection and prevention efforts?
5. How does your country balance the need for sustainable waste management with the enforcement of regulations to prevent the illicit trafficking of hazardous waste, and what initiatives have been implemented to promote environmentally sound disposal practices?

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