



The State of Narcotics in Northern Cyprus: Changes and Trends

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Abstract

This chapter examines trends in substance-use-related crimes and suspects in Northern Cyprus over a three-year period from 2021 and 2023. The analysis of data gathered from the Northern Cyprus Police reveals fluctuations in the number of cases and suspects, with a significant increase in cases in 2023. Despite variations, analysis of data suggests that, males found to be the primary suspects however the involvement of women is also noteworthy. Evaluation made by age group indicates higher substance-use-related crime rates among younger and middle-aged individuals. Furthermore, drug types and quantities vary by region, making targeted interventions a must and necessary. The data also reveals changing patterns by citizenship status, mainly among Turkish and dual citizens, suggesting cross-border dimensions to drug trafficking. To combat this substance-use-related crime effectively, gender-focused interventions are necessary. As a recommendation, enhancing prosecutorial and investigative processes, developing gender-focused approaches and strengthening cross-border cooperation will help to combat substance misuse and crimes related to it.

Keywords: Drug-related crimes, trends, suspects, citizenship, gender, cross-border cooperation, policy recommendations

A.1. Introduction

Over the course of a three-year period, there have been substantial alterations in the number of narcotic-related cases and suspects in Northern Cyprus.

This trend exhibited a total of 245 cases in the year 2021 and subsequently declined to 217 cases in 2022. However, it experienced a significant increase to 286 cases in the first ten months of 2023.

The presented data indicates a slight reduction in the number of individuals, from 363 to 323 between 2021 and 2022. However, the results then remained relatively constant at approximately 326 in 2023. Thus, the complex nature of this issue should be highlighted as this situation is further complicated with the involvement of diverse nationalities such as locals and dual citizens.

The gender distribution was predominantly consisted of males; however, it is crucial to acknowledge that females were also notably represented. According to the demographic data, it is demonstrated that the younger and middle-aged populations are more frequently impacted by narcotics issues as these results provide essential insights for developing preventative strategies to combat narcotic issues.

The analysis of narcotic data gathered from the Northern Cyprus Police which was examined with the special permission granted to Dr. Zafer Bekiroğulları.

The research spans from 2021 and 2023 and assesses multiple factors including genders, nationalities, age distributions, crime incidents, suspect counts and drug types and quantities. By adopting a comprehensive approach, the study safeguards data confidentiality and adheres to ethical requirements, with the main goal of providing trustworthy results.

A.2. Findings and Analysis

Table A-1. Cases and suspect numbers by year

Year	Case Numbers	Suspect Numbers
2021	245	363
2022	217	323
2023 (Jan 1 - Oct 10)	286	326

Table A-1. indicates that there is a substantial increase in the cases in 2023 when compared to 2022, however, the number of suspects remained relatively consistent, suggesting there is an ongoing difficulty in tackling narcotic-related challenges in Northern Cyprus.

Table A-2. Suspect numbers by citizenship status

Citizenship	2021	2022	2023 (Jan 1 - Oct 10)
Northern Cyprus (KKTC)	129	108	104
Türkiye (TC)	43	61	64
Dual (Türkiye-Northern Cyprus, TC-KKTC)	37	22	42
Other Nationalities	154	132	116

Table A-2. indicates that the involvement of individuals from foreign countries in criminal activities declines however, the rates for Turkish and dual citizens (Northern Cyprus – Türkiye) surged.

Table A-3. Suspect numbers by gender

Gender	2021	2022	2023 (Jan 1 - Oct 10)
Male	337	300	292
Female	26	23	34

Table A-3. indicates that the number of male suspects is disproportionately greater than the number of female suspects whereas it is worth mentioning that by the year 2023, the number of female suspects has also surged.

Table A-4. Annual distribution of the number of defendants categorized by age group

Age Group	%2021	%2022	%2023
0-11	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
12-14	0.28%	0.00%	0.00%
15-16	1.10%	0.62%	0.00%
17	0.83%	0.62%	0.92%
18	1.38%	1.86%	0.31%
19-21	9.92%	14.24%	13.50%
22-28	40.22%	43.65%	37.12%
29-32	14.60%	12.07%	11.35%
33-38	13.77%	14.24%	15.64%
39-43	8.54%	3.10%	9.51%
44-49	4.13%	4.02%	6.75%
50-55	2.20%	2.79%	2.15%
56-60	1.38%	2.17%	0.92%
61+	1.65%	0.62%	1.84%

Table A-4. translated into English while maintaining contextual explanation and displays the annual distribution of the number of defendants categorized by age group.

This data provides significant differences among the various age groups. Notably, the 22-28 age bracket clearly indicates the highest percentage over the years. This group found to display the highest crime rate of 40.22% in 2021, 43.65% in 2022, and 37.12% in 2023. Moreover, the 19-21 age group bracket exhibits substantial rates, suggesting that it is an

important demographic in terms of crime propensity, particularly in 2022 and 2023.

Examining different age groups, it is clear to mention that those between the ages of 0-16 had the lowest percentages, whereas the 33-38 and 39-43 age groups showed significant variations in crime rates.

Furthermore, it is also indicated in this data that individuals aged between 19 and 28 are more likely to engage in criminal activity than those in other age groups. This finding emphasizes the need for tailored programs and policies especially when designing strategies to prevent and intervene in crime rates (Resnicow et al., 2000). Moreover, the lowest crime rates that has been observed in those under 16 may suggest that preventive measures and educational initiatives could be beneficial (Spoth et al., 2008).

A.2.1. Drug Types and Seized Quantities by District (2023 Example)

Cannabis: The highest amount seizure by the Police in Famagusta was 61 kilograms, 956 grams and the highest amount in the capital city of Northern Cyprus, Nicosia was 4 kilograms, 810 grams.

Methamphetamine: The highest amount seized by the Police in Famagusta was 67 grams, 220 milligrams.

Note: It is crucial to note that the quantities of drugs seizure vary significantly by district, with particularly high quantities in Famagusta.

Table A-5. Crimes committed by port and land entry points

Entry Point	Number of Cases	Number of Suspects
Ercan Airport	10	15
Kyrenia Tourism Port	8	12
Metehan Land Gate	5	8
Lokmacı Land Gate	3	4
Beyarmudu Land Gate	2	3

The table presented reveals the number of crimes committed and the number of suspects involved across various ports and land entry points. Ercan Airport and Kyrenia Tourism Port emerge as the entry points with the highest incidence of criminal activity, suggesting their primary function as conduits for drug trafficking. To mitigate such crimes, heightened security measures and inspections at these ports and land gates are recommended.

A.2.2. Change in Number of Cases

The data shows a decrease of 11.43% from 2021 to 2022, followed by a significant increase of 31.80% from 2022 to 2023. This substantial rise in drug-related issues during the study period might be attributed to an increase in drug trade and usage or the effectiveness of control and awareness efforts.

A.2.3. Change in Number of Suspects

A 11.02% decrease was observed in the number of suspects from 2021 to 2022, followed by a slight increase of 0.93% from 2022 to 2023. Despite the increase in the number of cases, the rise in the number of suspects remained relatively limited, which could lead to speculation about the depth of investigations, rates of catching criminals, or effectiveness of legal processes.

A.2.4. Change According to Citizenship

A decrease among Northern Cyprus citizens might indicate a reduced rate of involvement in drug cases among local citizens.

An increase among Turkish citizens suggests a higher rate of involvement in drug use in this group.

A fluctuating change (first a significant decrease followed by a sharp increase) has been observed among dual citizens of Türkiye and the Northern Cyprus, which could suggest significant behavioural changes within this group during certain periods.

A decrease among the citizens of other countries could indicate a reduced rate of involvement in criminal activities for this group.

A.2.5. Change According to Gender

A decrease in male suspects could indicate a reduction in the number of men involved in drug cases, whereas an increase among female suspects might suggest that women are becoming more involved in drug cases. Further research may be required to thoroughly explore the relationship between gender dynamics and drug use and criminality (Becker & Hu, 2008)

These data provide significant insights into drug-related crimes and individuals involved. An increase in the number of cases may indicate an increase in drug use and trafficking within the community. Additionally, changes in gender and citizenship status demonstrate periodic and group-based shifts in the demographic distribution of these crimes. In particular, the increase in female suspects could be a new trend that requires further attention (Anker & Carroll, 2010). These findings offer important insights for policymakers, law enforcement, and community leaders in shaping strategies for combating drugs (Fattore et al., 2008).

A.3. Outcomes

A.3.1. Change in Number of Cases and Suspects

An increase in the number of drug-related cases indicates an increase in drug-related activities. However, changes in the number of suspects did not parallel this increase, suggesting that further research is needed on the effectiveness and efficiency of the investigation and prosecution processes.

A.3.2. Citizenship Status

Changes in the rates of involvement in drug crimes among different citizenship groups highlight the cross-border dimensions of drug trafficking and demographic distribution of these crimes. These findings highlight the

importance of cross-border cooperation and targeted intervention (Fuentes & Kelly, 1999).

A.3.3. Gender

An increase in the proportion of female suspects indicates an increase in the number of women involved in drug crimes. This finding highlights the importance of gender-focused and supportive intervention policies (Greenfield et al., 2007; Johnstone et al., 2022).

A.4. Discussion

This study examines recent trends in drug-related crimes and the individuals involved. The findings revealed a significant increase in the number of drug-related issues during the 2022-2023 period. The text provided suggests that there may be a rise in drug use and trafficking, which could be indicative of the increased effectiveness of legal interventions. However, this increase is not mirrored in the number of suspects, which raises questions about the efficacy of the investigation and prosecution processes. This suggests that further examination is necessary to determine the underlying causes of this discrepancy. The analysis according to citizenship status showed a decrease in the involvement of Northern Cyprus citizens in drug crimes, while an increase was observed among Turkish citizens, especially the dual citizens of Türkiye and Northern Cyprus. This may reflect the dynamics of cross-border drug trafficking and the tendencies of the different citizenship groups involved in these crimes. The sharp changes observed among dual citizens of Türkiye and the Northern Cyprus necessitate a thorough examination of the behaviours within this group. A gender-based analysis revealed a notable increase in the proportion of female suspects. This finding points to an increase in the number of women involved in drug crimes and underscores the importance of further research on the relationships between gender roles and drug use/criminality. The role of women in drug trafficking merits a comprehensive examination in order to fully comprehend the underlying

causes and implications of any emerging gender dynamics in this area. The potential for shifting gender dynamics suggests the need for a thorough review of this phenomenon.

A.5. Conclusion

Several recommendations can be listed regarding trends in substance use related crimes and combat drug use.

A.5.1. Policy and Practice

In order to more effectively combat drug use, it is necessary to enhance both the investigative (Daglioglu et al., 2020) and prosecutorial processes, as well as preventive measures (Hellowell, 1995). This can be accomplished through the implementation of targeted educational programs, public awareness campaigns, and community-based interventions.

A.5.2. Cross-Border Cooperation

Changes in citizenship status have highlighted the international dimensions of drug crimes. Therefore, cross-border cooperation and information sharing are vital for preventing drug trafficking (Naayif, 2023).

A.5.3. Gender-Focused Approaches

An increase in the proportion of female suspects necessitates the development of gender-sensitive interventions and support mechanisms. This means preventing crimes and developing rehabilitation and social integration programs for women involved in crimes (Fattore et al., 2008; Fattore, 2012).

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