

S'MUN2030

SINGULARITY MODEL UNITED NATIONS

UNODC

Targeting drug trafficking
on the deep web



SINGULARITY
FOUNDATION

 St PETER'S
SCHOOL
Barcelona

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About UNODC

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is a United Nations agency responsible for supporting the fight against illicit drugs and international crime, as well as being responsible for implementing the United Nations counter-terrorism program. UNODC was established in 1997 and has around 500 staff worldwide. It is headquartered in Vienna, Austria, but also has offices in various cities, such as Brussels and New York.

UNODC's main task is to educate people about the dangers of inappropriate use of drugs, as well as strengthening international interventions against drug production and trafficking.

In order to achieve the above objectives, UNODC has carried out a series of initiatives, among which alternatives to the cultivation of illicit drugs, such as alternatives to illicit drug cultivation, the monitoring of illicit crops and the implementation of various projects against drug laundering.

The agency also contributes to the prevention of this type of crime through assistance in criminal justice reform, which is aimed at strengthening laws against drug trafficking crimes. Criminal justice reform combats the growing threats of drug trafficking by promoting stable and viable criminal justice systems.

In 2002, the General Assembly of the United Nations approved an expanded program for the Terrorism Prevention Branch of UNODC. This type of activities focusses on providing assistance to Member States upon request.

In this regard, and with assistance in more than 150 countries, UNODC is in direct collaboration with governments and non-governmental organizations, with the task of developing and implementing drug control and drug-related crime prevention programs, always adapting them to each particular country's needs. The functions and competencies of UNODC can be summarized as follows:

1. Promote international policies and strategies to reduce drug trafficking, drug production and abuse, and improve assistance and treatment for drug users.
2. To provide technical and financial assistance to governments and civil society organizations for the development of programs and projects that address drug and crime problems.
3. Promote and support international cooperation in the fight against transnational crime, including human trafficking, migrant smuggling, illicit arms trafficking and corruption.
4. Develop and promote international standards and conventions for the prevention and control of drugs, crime and corruption.
5. Provide information and analysis on drug use, drug trafficking, crime and corruption at the global level, to assist governments and other stakeholders in making informed decisions on policies and strategies.
6. Working closely with other UN agencies and international and regional organizations to achieve a comprehensive and coordinated response to drug and crime problems.

In summary, UNODC's main mission is to promote policy programs that reduce drug trafficking, drug production and abuse, and improve assistance and treatment for drug users, as well as to prevent and control crime and corruption worldwide.

Introduction

The topic of targeting drug trafficking on the deep web is one of great importance to the international community. The deep web is a part of the internet that is not indexed by search engines and is only accessible through specialized software or configurations. Unfortunately, it has become a hub for illegal drug trade, with drug dealers exploiting the anonymity and privacy that it provides. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is responsible for addressing drug trafficking at the international level, and as members of this committee, it is crucial that we work together to develop effective strategies to address this issue.

Background

The deep web is a part of the internet that is not accessible through standard search engines such as Google, Bing, or Yahoo. Instead, it is only accessible through specialized software or configurations that enable users to access anonymous networks like Tor or I2P. These networks provide anonymity and privacy, which has led to the proliferation of illegal drug trade on the deep web. According to a report by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, the deep web accounts for a significant percentage of illegal drug trade, with drug dealers exploiting the anonymity and privacy that it provides to conduct their business.

Drug markets on the dark web only emerged a decade ago but major ones are now worth at least US\$ 315 million in annual sales. Although this is just a fraction of overall drug sales, the trend is upwards with a fourfold increase between 2011 to mid-2017 and mid-2017 to 2020.

Rapid technological innovation, combined with the agility and adaptability of those using new platforms to sell drugs and other substances, is likely to usher in a globalized market where all drugs are more available and accessible everywhere. This, in turn, could trigger accelerated changes in patterns of drug use and entail public health implications.

Goals

The primary goal of this study guide is to develop effective strategies to combat drug trafficking on the deep web. This can be achieved through:

1. Strengthening international cooperation and coordination to address drug trafficking on the deep web.
2. Developing and implementing effective law enforcement measures to disrupt drug trafficking on the deep web.

3. Raising public awareness about the dangers of drug use and the role of the deep web in facilitating illegal drug trade.

Policy Options

To achieve the goals mentioned above, the following policy options can be considered:

1. Enhancing international cooperation and coordination by:
 - a. Encouraging countries to share intelligence (surveillance, analysis of online activity, and investigation) on drug trafficking on the deep web.
 - b. Encouraging countries to harmonize their legislation on drug trafficking on the deep web.
 - c. Establishing an international task force to investigate and prosecute drug traffickers operating on the deep web.
2. Developing and implementing effective law enforcement measures:
 - a. Investing in the development of advanced technologies to monitor and detect drug trafficking on the deep web.
 - b. Encouraging law enforcement agencies to collaborate with internet service providers and social media companies to identify and track drug traffickers.
 - c. Developing and implementing harsher penalties for drug trafficking on the deep web.
3. Raising public awareness:
 - a. Launching public awareness campaigns to educate the public about the dangers of drug use and the role of the deep web in facilitating illegal drug trade.
 - b. Collaborating with the media to raise public awareness about the dangers of drug use and the role of the deep web in facilitating illegal drug trade.
 - c. Establishing a hotline or website for the public to report drug trafficking on the deep web.

Drug trafficking on the deep web is a serious issue that requires the attention of the international community. As members of the UNODC, it is our responsibility to develop effective strategies to combat this problem. By strengthening international cooperation and coordination, developing and implementing effective law enforcement measures, and raising public awareness, we can work together to disrupt drug trafficking on the deep web and reduce the harm caused by drug use.

Vocabulary

Non-governmental organizations (NGO's): a group that functions independently of any government and usually non-profit. They are established on community, national, and international levels to serve a social or political goal. An example is Greenpeace.

Deep web and darknet marketplaces: The deep web refers to the parts of the internet that are not fully accessible using standard search engines such as Google, Bing and Yahoo. Much of the content of the deep web is legitimate and noncriminal in nature, including email messages, chat messages, private content on social media sites, and electronic bank statements. However, it is used for other illicit activities. Users abuse the anonymity and privacy it provides to use it as a hub for illegal trade, among other activities. All these take place in what we call darknet market places, which operate in the deep web via darknets such as Tor or I2P. Darknet markets primarily function as online black-markets producing transaction involving weapons, stolen credit card details,

drugs...

Cryptocurrencies: A cryptocurrency is a form of digital asset based on a network that is distributed across a large number of computers. This decentralized structure allows them to exist outside the control of governments and central authorities. The high degree of anonymity and untraceability cryptocurrencies provide make them the primary payment options in darknet marketplaces.

Cybercrime investigations: Cybercrimes refer to criminal activities carried out by means of computers or the internet. A cybercrime investigation is the process of investigating, analysing, and recovering forensic data for digital evidence of a crime.

Law enforcement agencies (LEA): Any government agency responsible for the enforcement of the laws. These include a large variety of agencies such as, local police, federal LEA (such as the FBI), international LEA (such as the INTERPOL or EUROPOL).

International policy development: the process of creating, implementing, and evaluating policies that guide a country's interactions with other nations. Policy development involves identifying the goals and objectives that a country seeks to achieve in its international relations, and then formulating strategies and tactics to achieve those goals. This can involve negotiating treaties, creating economic and trade policies, developing foreign aid programs, or engaging in military alliances and operations.

Cross-border cooperation: Collaborative efforts between countries that involve sharing resources, information, and expertise to address common challenges or pursue shared goals. This cooperation can take many forms, including diplomatic, economic, social, and environmental partnerships. Cross-border cooperation is an important tool for promoting peace, prosperity, and sustainability in an increasingly interconnected world.

Governmental transparency and accountability: Governmental transparency refers to the principle that the activities and decision-making processes of governments should be open, accessible, and accountable to the public. Governmental accountability refers to the responsibility of governments to answer to their citizens for their actions and decisions. This includes ensuring that government officials are held responsible for their actions, that government policies and programs are effective and efficient, and that citizens have a mechanism to seek redress for grievances. In the issue of drug trafficking in the deep web increasing governmental transparency and accountability would help avoid corruption in local government when facing the issue.

Intelligence: In this context, intelligence refers to information gathered through various means, such as surveillance, analysis of online activity, and investigation, that is used to gain a better understanding of drug trafficking on the deep web. This information can then be used to identify and target individuals and groups involved in the trade, as well as to develop more effective strategies to combat it. Encouraging countries to share intelligence on drug trafficking on the deep web would involve sharing information that could lead to identifying and disrupting criminal networks. Establishing an international task force to investigate and prosecute drug traffickers operating on the deep web would require gathering and analysing intelligence to identify and track down these criminals.

Drug traffic and the deep web

The deep web, also known as the dark web, has become an attractive platform for the illicit drug trade due to several reasons. According to the UNODC report¹¹, here are some of the factors contributing to the attractiveness of the illicit drug trade on the deep web:

1. **Anonymity:** The deep web provides a high level of anonymity for both buyers and sellers, making it difficult for law enforcement agencies to track down the individuals involved in drug trafficking. Transactions on the deep web are conducted through anonymous communication networks, such as Tor, which protect the identity of the parties involved.
2. **Accessibility:** The deep web is easily accessible to anyone with an internet connection and is not subject to the same restrictions as the surface web. This accessibility makes it easier for individuals to purchase drugs online without attracting the attention of law enforcement agencies.
3. **Global reach:** The deep web has a global reach, allowing drug traffickers to connect with buyers from all over the world. This means that drug traffickers can expand their customer base, increase their profits, and avoid detection by selling drugs to people in countries where drug laws are less strict.
4. **Payment options:** The deep web offers a range of payment options, including cryptocurrencies, which provide a high degree of anonymity and security for both buyers and sellers. This makes it easier for individuals to purchase drugs without leaving a traceable financial trail.
5. **Reduced risk:** Drug traffickers who use the deep web can reduce the risk of being caught by law enforcement agencies. They can avoid face-to-face interactions with buyers and can operate from the safety of their own homes, reducing the risk of being detected by law enforcement.

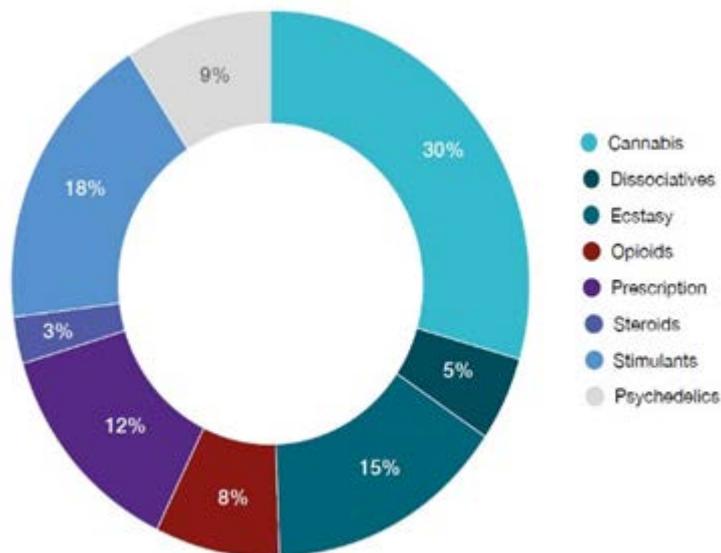
Overall, the anonymity, accessibility, global reach, payment options, and reduced risk associated with the deep web make it an attractive platform for the illicit drug trade. The UNODC recognizes the importance of addressing this issue to reduce the availability of drugs and the harm they cause.

The most widely traded category of products on the Tor darknet is drugs. The combined total number of items on sale on the four targeted marketplaces in December 2019, according to the World Drug Report 2020² is 138,405 and, of these, 94,389 were drug items. The types of drugs include MDMA, amphetamine, methamphetamine, cannabis in all forms, cocaine, opioids in all forms, LSD, psychedelic mushrooms, ketamine and prescription drugs (mostly benzodiazepines).

¹ In Focus: Trafficking over the Darknet - World Drug Report 2020. Available: https://www.unodc.org/documents/Focus/WDR20_Booklet_4_Darknet_web.pdf

² In Focus: Trafficking over the Darknet - World Drug Report 2020. Available: https://www.unodc.org/documents/Focus/WDR20_Booklet_4_Darknet_web.pdf

Percentage of drug types available on four popular marketplaces in December 2019



The case of Asia and Southeast Asia

The use of the deep web for drug trafficking in Asia has also been a growing concern for law enforcement agencies in recent years. According to the UNODC, the dark web has become an increasingly popular platform for drug trafficking in Asia, with a significant increase in the volume of drugs sold on these platforms.

UNODC has reported that the majority of drug sales on the deep web in Asia are related to synthetic drugs, such as methamphetamine and its variants, which are produced in large quantities in the region. In particular, methamphetamine continues to be the most commonly trafficked drug in Asia, with seizures of the drug in the region accounting for over 70% of global seizures in recent years.

The use of cryptocurrencies as a means of payment for drugs on the deep web is also becoming more common in Asia.

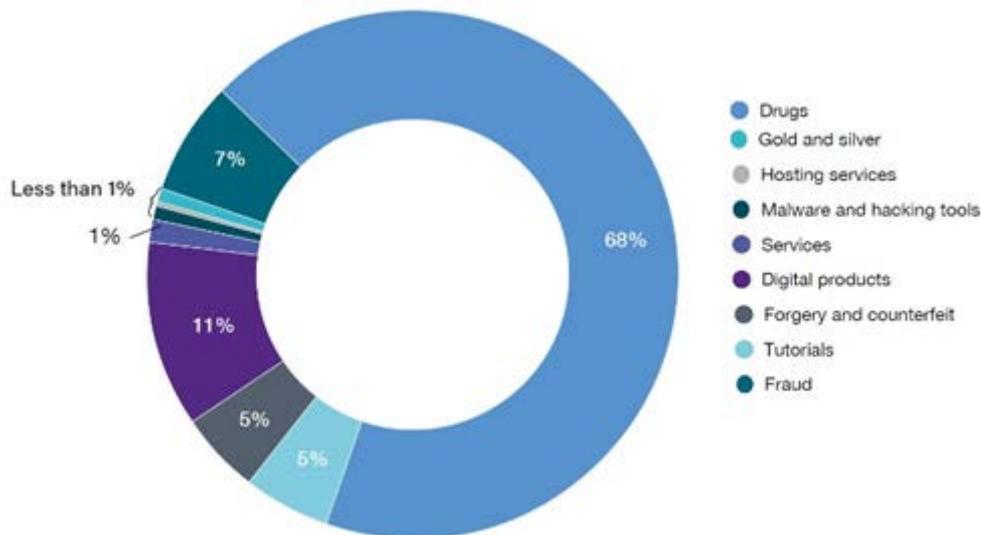
Despite these efforts, drug trafficking on the deep web remains a major challenge for law enforcement agencies in Asia, and there is a need for greater cooperation and collaboration between countries in the region to combat this illicit trade.

According to a statement by the UNODC Regional Representative for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, Jeremy Douglas, the most common category of illicit products sold on darknet markets is drugs. As of the end of 2019, the four largest darknet marketplaces had just under 140,000 items for sale, of which almost 95,000 were drug or drug-related items. Darknet markets in the region also trade precursor chemicals used in the production of synthetic and semi-synthetic drugs. The anonymity provided by darknet markets has allowed organized crime groups to openly advertise illegal products in recent years, with the COVID-19 pandemic accelerating this trend. A regional counter-darknet cybercrime

strategy is needed to improve cross-border cooperation and law enforcement capacity, and the UNODC plans to work with its ASEAN and international partners to build support for this in the near to medium term.

According to the data provided by UNODC, there has been a rise in arrests related to darknet activities in Southeast Asia. This suggests that criminals view the region as an environment with low risk and high gain, where the probability of detection is relatively low. An example of this is the arrest of the main administrator of the AlphaBay darknet marketplace, who was arrested in Thailand in July 2017 after a coordinated effort by Thai and foreign law enforcement authorities. Other similar arrests have been made in different Southeast Asian countries related to the production, possession, and dissemination of online child sexual exploitation materials. These cases are often initiated by international investigations outside the region, as there is limited local capability and specialist operational knowledge regarding darknet marketplaces, anonymizing technologies, cryptocurrency investigations, and intelligence-gathering.

To address this, a ministerial or senior official and lead agency for cyber affairs should prioritize improving local capabilities in this area, including the development of policies and cross-border cooperation. The UNODC collaborates closely with countries in the region to increase awareness, improve capacity for investigations, prosecutions, and adjudications of cybercrime within a strong human-rights framework.



Percentage of products and services available on Darkweb Marketplaces

The case of South and Central America

Drug trafficking on the deep web also affects South and Central America. To target drug trafficking on the deep web in this region, it is crucial to understand the reasons why it is attractive for criminals, as well as the challenges faced by law enforcement agencies.

We have already mentioned above the factors that facilitate and make attractive this growing use of the deep web for drug trafficking, such as anonymity, use of cryptocurrencies. Additionally, deep web marketplaces allow drug traffickers to reach a larger customer base, without being restricted by geographic boundaries.

Moreover, the widespread corruption in some countries in South and Central America can enable drug traffickers to operate with impunity. They can bribe law enforcement officials and other government representatives to avoid being caught, creating an environment that is conducive to criminal activities.

To address this issue, law enforcement agencies in South and Central America need to improve their capacity for cybercrime investigations, particularly in relation to deep web marketplaces. This includes developing specialist operational knowledge regarding darknet marketplaces, anonymizing technologies, cryptocurrency investigations, and intelligence-gathering.

It is also essential to increase cross-border cooperation between countries in the region to tackle drug trafficking on the deep web. This can involve sharing information and resources, as well as working together to disrupt drug trafficking networks and arrest their members.

In addition, there needs to be a focus on reducing corruption in the region to prevent drug traffickers from using it as a means to operate with impunity. This can involve increasing transparency and accountability in government institutions, as well as providing law enforcement agencies with the necessary resources and training to conduct investigations and prosecutions effectively.

Overall, targeting drug trafficking on the deep web in South and Central America requires a comprehensive approach that addresses the underlying reasons for its attractiveness, improves the capacity of law enforcement agencies, and increases cross-border cooperation to disrupt drug trafficking networks.

As the deep web is an anonymous and encrypted space, data on drug trafficking specifically related to this region is limited. However, there have been some reported cases of law enforcement efforts targeting drug trafficking on the deep web in South and Central America.

For example, in 2018, Brazilian authorities arrested a group of individuals suspected of operating a drug trafficking ring on the deep web. The suspects allegedly used a website to sell drugs such as cocaine, LSD, and ecstasy, and were able to receive payments in cryptocurrencies. In another case, in 2020, the Colombian National Police announced the dismantling of a criminal organization that sold illegal drugs on the deep web. The operation resulted in the seizure of drugs, cash, and electronic devices.

Despite these efforts, drug trafficking on the deep web continues to be a significant challenge for law enforcement agencies in South and Central America. The anonymity and encryption used on the deep web make it difficult to detect and disrupt drug trafficking networks, and the widespread corruption in some countries in the region further complicates efforts to combat this illicit trade.

UNODC data³ shows that South and Central America continue to be major drug-producing regions, with significant amounts of cocaine and other drugs being produced and trafficked through the region. In 2020, the region accounted for 90% of the global cocaine seizures, indicating the extent of the drug trade in the area. This underscores the importance of targeting drug trafficking on the deep web in the region to disrupt the supply chain and reduce the harms associated with drug use and abuse.

The case of Europe

The use of the deep web for drug trafficking has been a growing concern in Europe in recent years. According to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), the number of drug sales on the dark web has been increasing steadily since 2013, with the most commonly sold drugs being cannabis, MDMA, cocaine, and amphetamines.

A report by Europol, the European Union's law enforcement agency, found that the deep web has become an increasingly popular platform for drug trafficking in Europe, with a significant increase in the volume of drugs sold on these platforms. Europol also noted that the use of cryptocurrencies as a means of payment for drugs on the deep web has become more common, with Bitcoin being the most commonly used currency.

Law enforcement agencies in Europe have taken steps to target drug trafficking on the deep web, with several high-profile cases in recent years. Despite these efforts, drug trafficking on the deep web remains a major challenge for law enforcement agencies in Europe, and there is a need for greater cooperation and collaboration between countries in the region to combat this illicit trade. Europol has called for a more coordinated and comprehensive approach to addressing drug trafficking on the deep web, which includes increased intelligence sharing, enhanced cooperation between law enforcement agencies, and the use of new technologies to combat the use of the deep web for criminal purposes.

The case of Africa

There is limited data available on drug trafficking on the deep web in Africa, as the use of the deep web for illicit activities is not as prevalent in Africa as it is in other parts of the world. However, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Africa is increasingly being used as a transit hub for drug trafficking, with criminal groups taking advantage of weak law enforcement and border control measures.

There have been some cases of drug trafficking on the deep web in Africa, with drugs such as cannabis and cocaine being sold on dark web marketplaces. In 2018, South African authorities arrested two men for their involvement in a dark web drug trafficking ring that was reportedly operating across the country.

³ In Focus: Trafficking over the Darknet - World Drug Report 2020. Available: https://www.unodc.org/documents/Focus/WDR20_Booklet_4_Darknet_web.pdf

The UNODC has highlighted the need for increased efforts to combat drug trafficking in Africa, both on the surface web and the deep web. This includes the need for greater cooperation and information sharing between law enforcement agencies in different countries, as well as the need to strengthen border control measures and improve the capacity of law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute drug trafficking cases.

While drug trafficking on the deep web may not be as prevalent in Africa as it is in other regions the growing use of the deep web for illicit activities globally underscores the need for greater vigilance and cooperation in combatting this challenge.

Qarmas:

The online trafficking of drugs is a problem that has arisen only recently, and therefore its development and solutions are still scarce. For this reason, we invite you, in view of the discussion sessions, to work on the following questions;

- What role do cryptocurrencies play in online drug trafficking; do countries have to impose restrictive measures on this type of currency in order to curb this kind of crime? What is the role of governments in this area?
- Should the UNODC condemn these types of situations and urge these countries to and urge these governments to strengthen their institutions in the face of this type of action? What are the main disadvantages of this type of action?
- What are the main disadvantages of online drug trafficking compared to traditional drug trafficking? and what are the aspects of this problem that UNODC should focus more on?
- Due to the lack of legislative development on the topic should UNODC develop a regulatory framework for member states to improve their laws regarding drug trafficking in the deep web?

- What mechanisms should the UNODC promote for greater multilateral support between the various national agencies of the Member States dedicated to cybercrime and drug trafficking?

Bibliography and interesting sources of information

For the topic "Targeting drug trafficking on the deep web", some interesting sources of information may be:

"Drugs on the Dark Web: How Cryptomarkets are Transforming the Global Trade in Illicit Drugs" by Judith Aldridge, David Décary-Héту, Martin Bouchard and David Morselli. This book explores how Dark Web marketplaces are transforming the global trade in illicit drugs.

"Global Drug Survey 2020" from Global Drug Survey, which includes data on online and black-market drug use around the world.

"Illicit Trade Report 2020" by INTERPOL, which provides information on illicit trade

worldwide, including online drug trafficking. INTERPOL. (2020). Illicit Trade Report 2020. <https://www.interpol.int/content/download/15348/225634/file/ITR2020.pdf>.

"The Drug Market on the Dark Web: Lessons Learned" by RAND Corporation, which provides an assessment of the challenges facing efforts to combat online drug trafficking. Kilmer, B., Caulkins, J. P., Midgette, G., & Dahlkemper, L. (2015). The dark web drug market: Lessons learned. RAND Corporation.

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B. <https://www.unodc.org/ropan/es/el-informe-mundial-sobre-las-drogas-2022-destaca-las-tendencias-del-cannabis-posteriores-a-su-legalizacin-el-impacto-ambiental-de-las-drogas-ilcitas-y-el-consumo-de-drogas-entre-las-mujeres-y-las-personas-jovenes.html>

Aldridge, J., Décary-Hétu, D., Bouchard, M., & Morselli, D. (2016). Drugs on the dark web: How cryptomarkets are transforming the global illicit drug trade. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 35, 121-130. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2016.05.011>.

Aldridge, J., Décary-Hétu, D., Bouchard, M., & Morselli, D. (2016). Drugs on the dark web: How cryptomarkets are transforming the global illicit drug trade. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 35, 121-130.

Computer crime and cybersecurity:

[https://www.unodc.org/documents/organizedcrime/UNODC CCPCJ EG.4 2019 INF.3 .pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/organizedcrime/UNODC_CCPCJ_EG.4_2019_INF.3.pdf)

Darknet and Bitcoin:

https://www.unodc.org/documents/eastasiaandpacific/2019/08/2019-08-30_Research_Paper_-_Darknet_and_Bitcoin_small.pdf

Drug trafficking and related crimes on the Internet:

[https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and.analysis/tocta/TOCTA_Report_2020_ONLINE_small.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/tocta/TOCTA_Report_2020_ONLINE_small.pdf)

Global Drug Survey (2020). Global Drug Survey 2020: Key findings report.

https://www.globaldrugsurvey.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/GDS2020-key-findings-report_final.pdf

INTERPOL. (2020). Illicit trade report 2020.

Kilmer, B., Caulkins, J. P., Midgette, G., & Dahlkemper, L. (2015). The drug market on the dark web: Lessons learned. RAND Corporation.

UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) reports can be a useful source of

information for the topic "Targeting drug trafficking on the deep web". Here are some relevant UNODC reports:

UNODC report: darknet cybercrime is on the rise in Southeast Asia. (s. f.). United Nations : UNODC Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific.
<https://www.unodc.org/roseap/en/2021/02/darknet-cybercrime-southeast-asia/story.html>

World Drug Report 2020: <https://wdr.unodc.org/wdr2020/>

World Drug Survey (2020). World Drug Survey 2020: Key findings report.