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CARICC Information Bulletin № 260

***Drug situation in CARICC Member States
at the end of 1st quarter of 2026¹***

14 May 2026

In order to fulfill its mandate in a timely and effective manner, CARICC continuously monitors developments in drug situation and prepares forecasts of future trends.

This statistical report is provided for information of competent authorities of CARICC member states and partners, presenting data on results of efforts to combat illicit drug trafficking in CARICC member states as of the end of the 1st quarter of 2026 compared to the same period in 2025².

I. General trends

Analysis of statistical data for the 1st quarter of 2026 across CARICC member states indicates that drug threat remains high and that illicit drug market continues to evolve toward organized, transnational, and technologically advanced forms of criminal activity.

1. Rise of organized drug crime

According to results of the 1st quarter of 2026, most CARICC member states reported an increase in crimes committed by organized criminal groups and through prior conspiracy.

The most pronounced trends are:

In the Republic of Kazakhstan – a **50%** increase in organized crime (from 18 to 27);

In the Republic of Uzbekistan – more than 4 times (from 3 to 13);

The Republic of Azerbaijan registered the first case of organized crime group activity;

At the same time, there has been an increase in the number of crimes related to drug trafficking via digital platforms and Internet.

These figures indicate a further increase in organized nature of drug crime, adaptation of criminal networks to modern conditions, and active use of internet communications, cryptocurrency transactions, “dropping” schemes, “stash” distribution method, and cross-border logistics.

¹ Prepared on the basis of submitted reports from competent authorities of CARICC Member States.

² Ministry of Internal Affairs of Turkmenistan did not provide data for 1st quarter of 2026.

2. Intensification of transnational nature of drug trafficking

Despite mixed trends across specific types of crime, cross-border drug activity remains at a high level.

Specifically:

The number of crimes related to drug smuggling in Kazakhstan increased by **57.1%**;

in Azerbaijan by **25,8%**;

in Russia by **10,7%**;

Kyrgyzstan maintains high levels of internationally controlled deliveries;

The number of internal controlled deliveries in Uzbekistan grew from **1 to 8**.

It is noted that geographic scope of foreign nationals detained for involvement in drug trafficking is expanding. Citizens of Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, India, Türkiye, Bangladesh, and other countries are being apprehended in a number of states.

These factors indicate that international drug trafficking routes remain active and underscore the need to further strengthen exchange of intelligence and analytical information between countries.

3. Changes in the structure of drug market

According to results of the 1st quarter of 2026, cannabis-group drugs continue to dominate the market, while prevalence of synthetic drugs and psychotropic substances is still growing.

Particular attention should be paid to:

A-PVP seizures in Kazakhstan increased to **196 kg**;

Significant quantities of mephedrone in Kazakhstan – more than **154 kg**;

An increase of more than **3.6 times** in the amount of psychotropic substances in Tajikistan;

Growth of identified clandestine laboratories in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan;

The number of precursor seizures in Kazakhstan rose almost **2.6-fold**.

At the same time, the list of new psychoactive substances and synthetic stimulants subject to seizure was further expanded to include mephedrone, A-PVP, MDMA, synthetic cannabinoids, 3-CMC, 4-CMC, pregabalin, gabapentin, and other substances.

These trends point to a gradual shift in illicit drug market toward synthetic drugs, production and distribution of which require fewer logistical resources and allow organized groups to adapt more quickly to law enforcement measures.

II. Recorded drug crimes and individuals arrested

1. Registered drug crimes

At the end of the 1st quarter of 2026, the number of reported drug crimes remained high in CARICC member states.

The most significant growth was recorded:

in the Republic of Uzbekistan – by **25.1%**;

in the Republic of Tajikistan – by **29.3%**;

in the Republic of Azerbaijan – by **6.3%**.

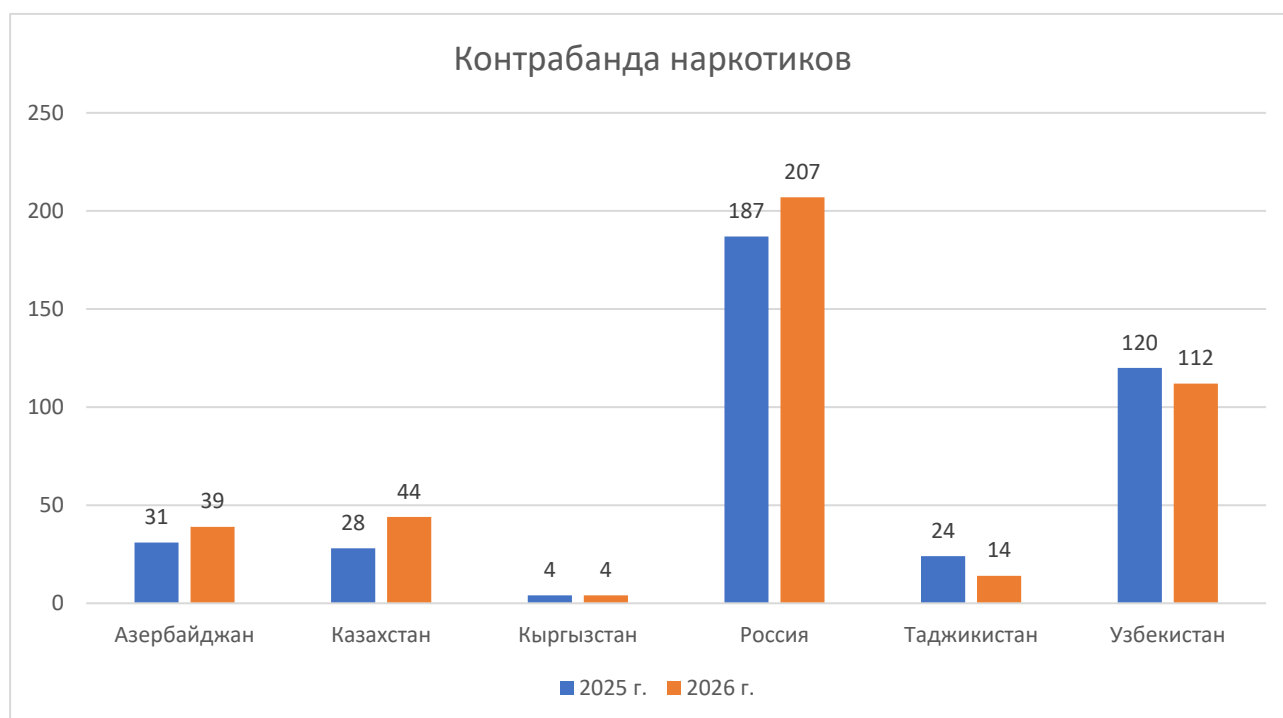
Simultaneously, a decline was recorded in the Russian Federation (by **40.1%**), in the Kyrgyz Republic (by **12.7%**), and in the Republic of Kazakhstan (by **0.7%**).

Registered drug crimes (1st quarter of 2025–2026)

Indicator	Azerbaijan	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Russia	Tajikistan	Uzbekistan
2025	2 316	911	314	60 680	256	3 261
2026	2 462	905	274	36 333	331	4 079
Dynamics	+6,3%	-0,7%	-12,7%	-40,1%	+29,3%	+25,1%

2. Drug smuggling

Despite varying trends across the region’s countries, crime rates related to drug trafficking remain high overall.



Drug smuggling (1st Quarter of 2025–2026)

Indicator	Azerbaijan	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Russia	Tajikistan	Uzbekistan
2025	31	28	4	187	24	120
2026	39	44	4	207	14	112
Dynamics	+25,8%	+57,1%	0%	+10,7%	-41,7%	-6,7%

Increased smuggling activity in Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and the Russian Federation may indicate a resurgence of international drug trafficking routes, as well as a shift in some of these flows toward northern and trans-Caspian routes.

3. Crimes committed by organized groups

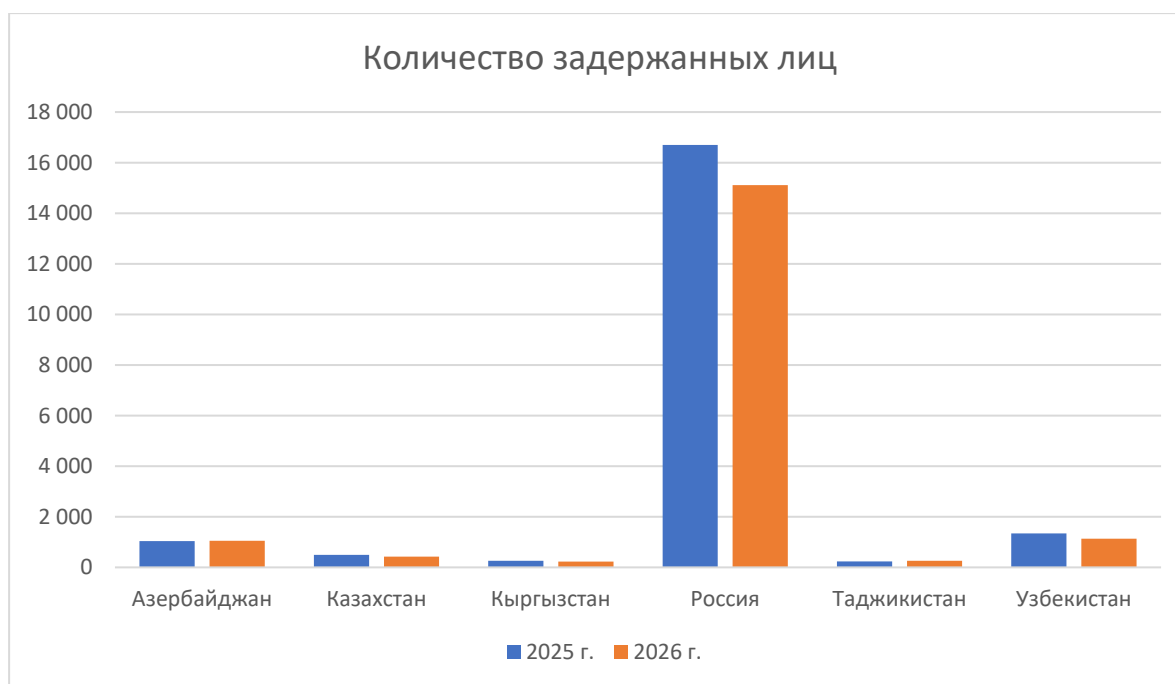
Drug crimes committed by organized criminal groups (1st quarter of 2025–2026)

Indicator	Azerbaijan	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Russia	Tajikistan	Uzbekistan
2025	0	18	8	н/д	0	3
2026	1	27	6	н/д	0	13
Dynamics	-	+50%	-25%	-	0%	+333%

Growth in the number of crimes committed by organized groups indicates that criminal networks remain robust and are adapting to modern methods of concealing and distributing drugs.

4. Arrested persons

As of the end of the 1st quarter of 2026, a significant number of individuals were detained in CARICC member states for drug crimes.



Number of persons arrested (1st quarter of 2025–2026)

Indicator	Azerbaijan	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Russia	Tajikistan	Uzbekistan
2025	1 038	493	260	16 697	233	1 342
2026	1 050	423	230	15 114	259	1 133
Dynamics	+1,2%	-14,2%	-11,5%	-9,5%	+11,2%	-15,6%

Males continue to make up the majority of apprehended individuals. At the same time, there have been reports of minors, foreign nationals, and individuals involved in online drug trafficking.

III. Seized narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, and precursors

1. Total amount of drugs seized

At the end of the 1st quarter of 2026, significant quantities of narcotic drugs are still being seized in CARICC member states.

Narcotic drugs seized (1st quarter of 2025–2026)

Indicator	Azerbaijan	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Russia	Tajikistan	Uzbekistan
2025 (kg)	2 026,9	3 191,3	1 482,4	8 332	1 429,3	1 165,0
2026 (kg)	2 905,9	1 683,6	87,9	6 089	1 674,7	734,7
Dynamics	+43,4%	-47,2%	-94,1%	-26,9%	+17,2%	-36,9%



Amount of drugs seized during 3 months of 2025–2026. (● - 2025, ● - 2026)

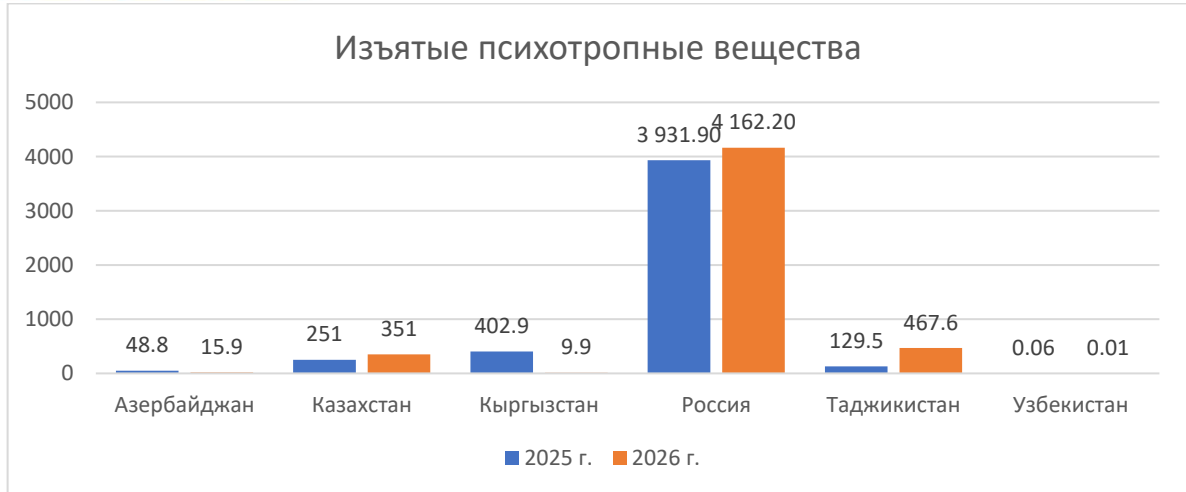
The largest quantities of seizures are traditionally attributed to cannabis-group drugs.

2. Seizure of cannabis-group drugs

Marijuana, hashish, cannabis plants, and cannabis extracts account for the majority of seizures. The largest quantities of cannabis products were seized in Azerbaijan – over **2.6 tons**; in Kazakhstan – more than **1.1 tons** of marijuana; and in Tajikistan – more than **834 kg** of hashish.

3. Seizure of synthetic drugs and psychotropic substances

The largest amounts of synthetic drugs were seized in Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, and Tajikistan. Of particular note are increased seizures of A-PVP, growth in mephedrone, an increase in MDMA, and the spread of new psychoactive substances.

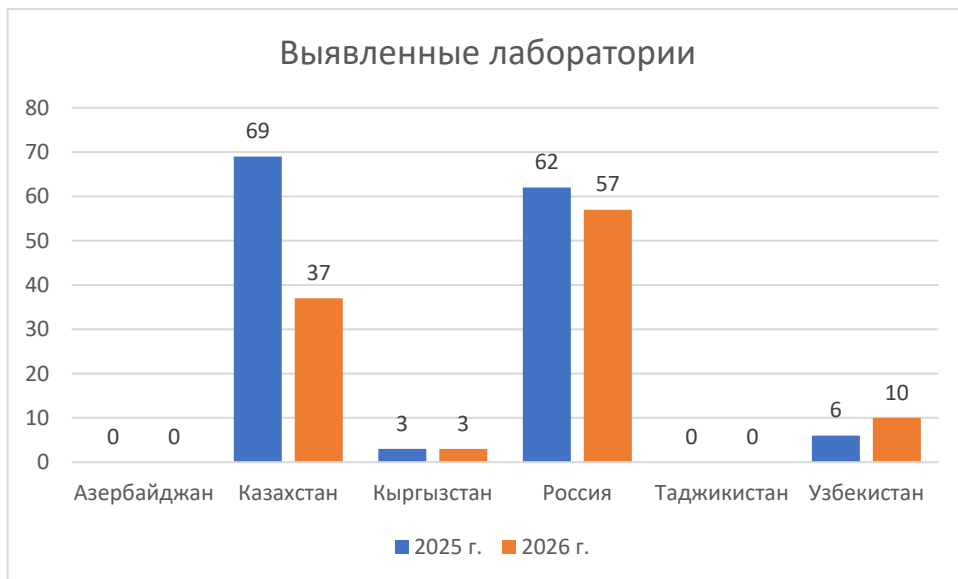


Seized psychotropic substances (1st quarter of 2025–2026)

Indicator	Azerbaijan	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Russia	Tajikistan	Uzbekistan
2025	48,8 kg	251 kg	402,9 kg	3 931,9 kg	129,5 kg	63,8 g
2026	15,9 kg	351 kg	9,9 kg	4 162,2 kg	467,6 kg	11,2 g
Dynamics	-67,4%	+39,8%	-97,5%	+5,9%	+261%	-82,4%

Rising volumes of psychotropic substances in the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan indicate ongoing expansion of synthetic segment of drug market.

4. Clandestine laboratories



Detected clandestine laboratories (1st quarter of 2025–2026)

Indicator	Azerbaijan	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Russia	Tajikistan	Uzbekistan
2025	0	69	3	62	0	6
2026	0	37	3	57	0	10
Dynamics	0%	-46,4%	0%	-8,1%	0%	+66,7%

Growth in the number of laboratories in Uzbekistan and continued high detection rates in Kazakhstan and Russia suggest ongoing expansion of domestic synthetic drug production.

5. Precursors

Significant quantities of precursors were seized in Kazakhstan – over **11** tons, up **155%**; in the Russian Federation – over **10** tons, up **28%**; and in Uzbekistan – over **3.4** tons, up **62%**.

Key precursors subject to seizure include acetone, hydrochloric acid, acetic anhydride, 4-methylpropiofenone, 2-bromo-1-(4-methylphenyl)propan-1-one, and methylamine.

Growth in the volume of precursor seizures indicates that illicit synthetic drug production remains active.

IV. Main findings

Analysis of drug situation based on the results of the 1st quarter of 2026 shows the following key trends:

1. Organized and transnational drug crime remains at a high level.
2. Criminal market trends continue to shift toward synthetic drugs and psychotropic substances.
3. Use of digital technologies, online platforms, messaging apps, and contactless sales channels is on the rise.
4. Cross-border drug trafficking routes are becoming more active, including those along northern and trans-Caspian routes.
5. Illicit trafficking of precursor chemicals and clandestine production of synthetic drugs remain at high levels.

V. Forecasts and recommendations

In the short term, organized criminal groups are expected to continue adapting to law enforcement measures, increase their use of digital platforms and cryptocurrency tools, expand production of synthetic drugs, expand clandestine manufacturing operations, and exploit international transport corridors to conceal drug trafficking.

In this regard, CARICC considers it advisable to step up exchange of intelligence between states, intensify joint international operations, expand analytical monitoring of online segment of drug trade, refine control over precursor, develop early warning mechanisms for emergence of new synthetic drugs, continue standardization of statistical reporting methods among CARICC member states, and strengthen cooperation in identifying transnational organized groups and digital drug distribution channels.