

CARICC Information Bulletin № 261

*Regional drug situation overview:
figures, trends, findings (1st half of 2026)
(based on electronic media reports)¹*

10 July 2026

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¹ All data on seizures can be found on CARICC official website, <https://caricc.org> in the “Publications—Summaries” section as well as on seizures portal, <https://seizures.caricc.org>

Introduction to current drug trends in the region

The present analytical overview is based on a dataset of media reports compiled from CARICC weekly summaries on seizures of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors during the first half of 2026 (Nos. 1–18).

This information overview covers **six CARICC participating countries** (excluding Turkmenistan) – Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan – and contains information on cross-border movement of illicit substances, structures of criminal groups, cases of drug trafficking and clandestine laboratories as well as involvement of foreign nationals and other relevant information.

In the first half this year competent authorities of CARICC participating countries reported **1,465** identified cases of seizures of narcotic drugs and precursors in media.

As a result, seizures amounted to **15 tons and 824 kg** of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, including: **opium-group drugs – 752 kg** (heroin – 210 kg, opium – 446 kg); **cannabis-group drugs – 9 tons and 745 kg** (hashish – 2 tons and 375 kg, marijuana – 5 tons and 120 kg), **synthetic drugs – 4 tons and 62 kg**, **potent substances (PS) – 1 ton and 211 kg** and **precursors – 45 tons and 116 kg**.

Significant volume of seized drugs exceeding **15 tons** indicates that drug crime remains active in the region. At the same time, seizure statistics indicate a growing trend toward a shift in drug market from conventional drugs (cannabis-group) to highly concentrated synthetic compounds and potent pharmaceuticals.

Table 1 – Breakdown of seized drugs (in kg)

Country	Opium group	Cannabis group	Cocaine group	Synthetic group	PS	Precursors	Total
AZERBAIJAN	260.6	3015.7		156.7	0.1		3433.2
KAZAKHSTAN	9.5	2414.8	0.1	1266.4		22050.0	25740.8
KYRGYZSTAN	20.0	292.7		32.8	99.0	69.9	514.5
RUSSIA	62.7	2320.7	53.1	2487.4	117.3	21286.0	26327.2
TAJIKISTAN	39.0	170.0		1.5			210.5
UZBEKISTAN	360.2	1531.3		117.1	994.8	1710.5	4714.0
TOTAL	752.0	9745.3	53.2	4061.9	1211.2	45116.4	60940.0

Table 2 – Cases of drug seizures in the 1st half of 2026

Country	Opium group	Cannabis group	Cocaine group	Synthetic group	PS	Precursors	Total
AZERBAIJAN	55	157		59	1		272
KAZAKHSTAN	5	55	1	82		11	154
KYRGYZSTAN	1	36		22	7	1	67
RUSSIA	17	221	20	434	29	26	747
TAJIKISTAN	2	7		1			10
UZBEKISTAN	44	88		39	40	4	215
TOTAL	124	564	21	637	77	42	1465

Main types of drugs and their share

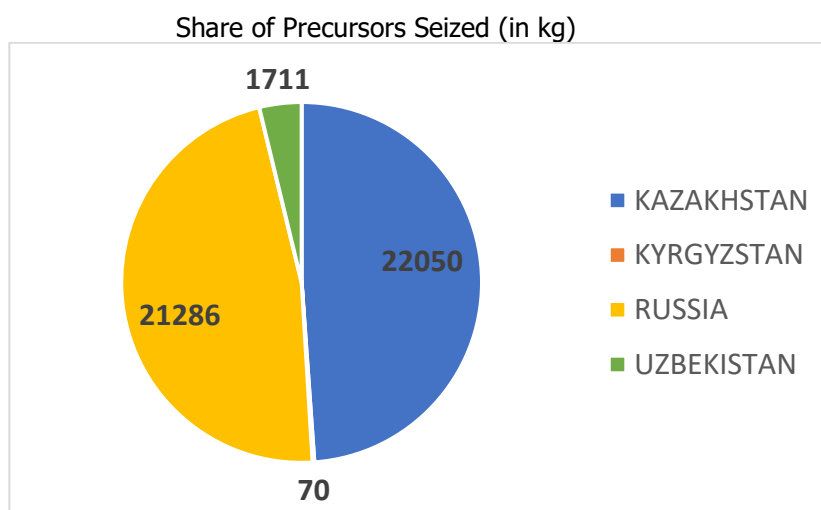
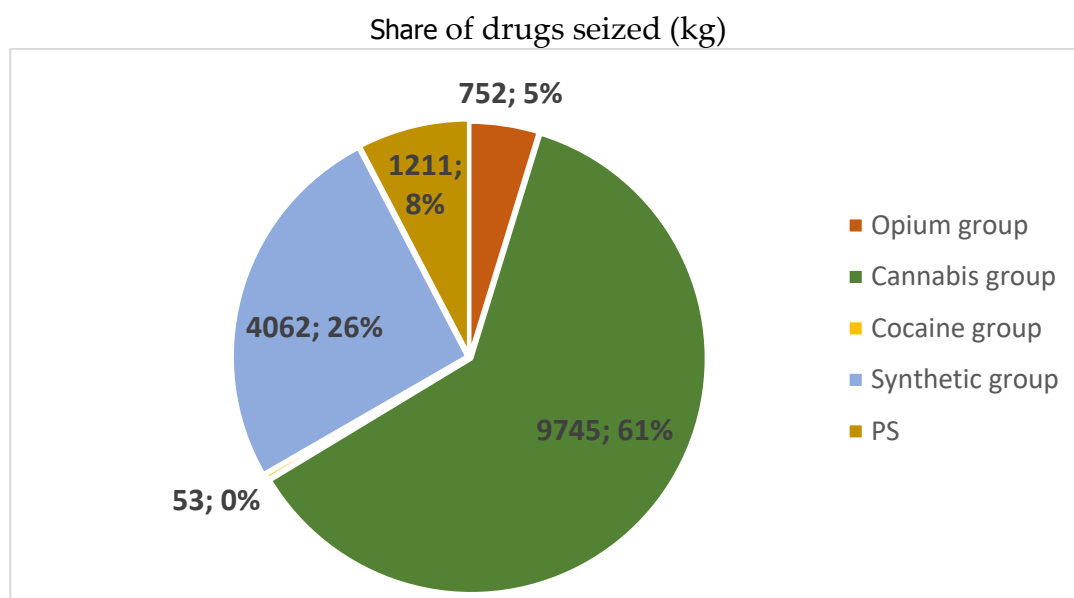
The cannabis group (marijuana, hashish, hashish oil, cannabis) accounts for the largest share of the total amount seized: **more than 60%** of total weight.

This is due both to widespread availability of raw materials and to large shipments intercepted during smuggling (for example, in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan).

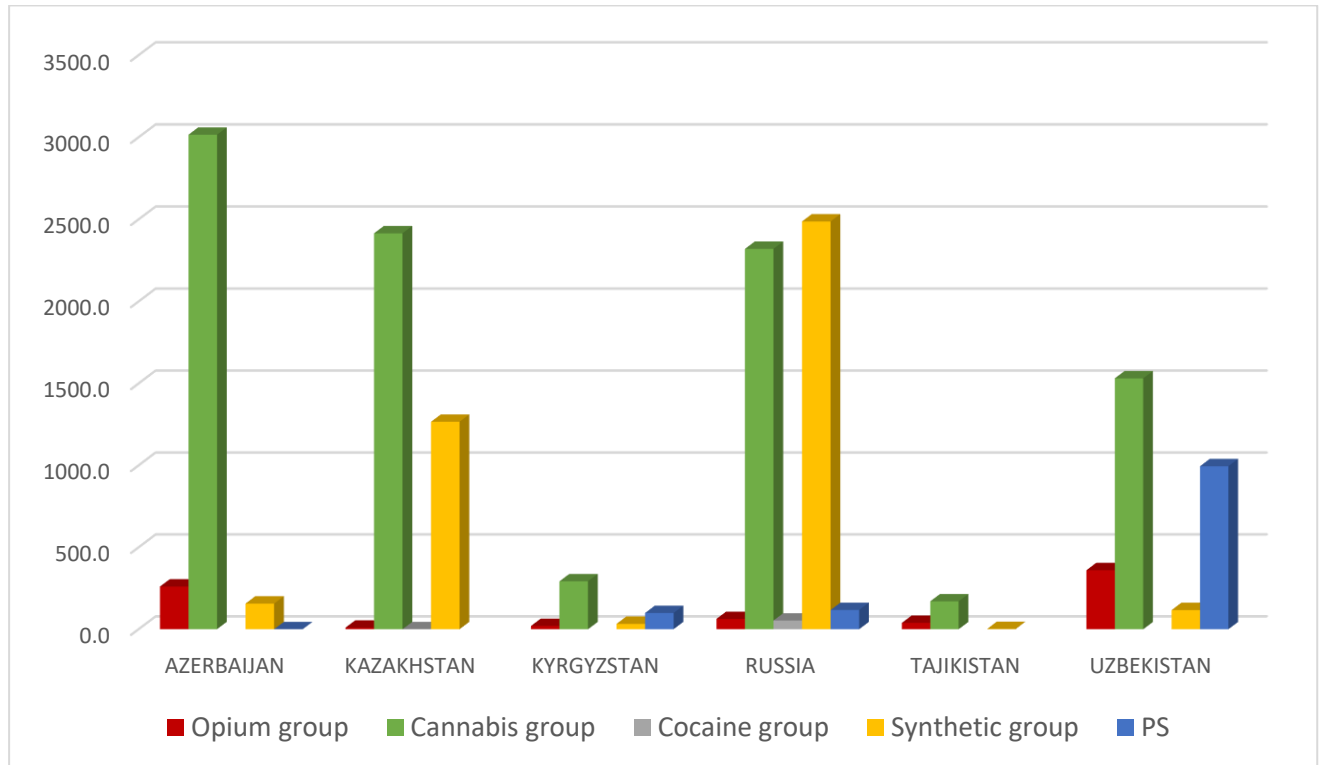
Synthetic drugs (mephedrone, alpha-PVP, methamphetamine, N-methylephedrone, etc.) **rank second** and represent **more than 25%** of total weight; however, their share of the total number of operations is significantly higher – about half of all seizures (**45%**) involved synthetic drugs, reflecting a trend toward laboratory production and contactless distribution.

Opium-group drugs (heroin, raw opium, opium poppy) – **5%**, with a significant portion coming from Afghanistan via transit through Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

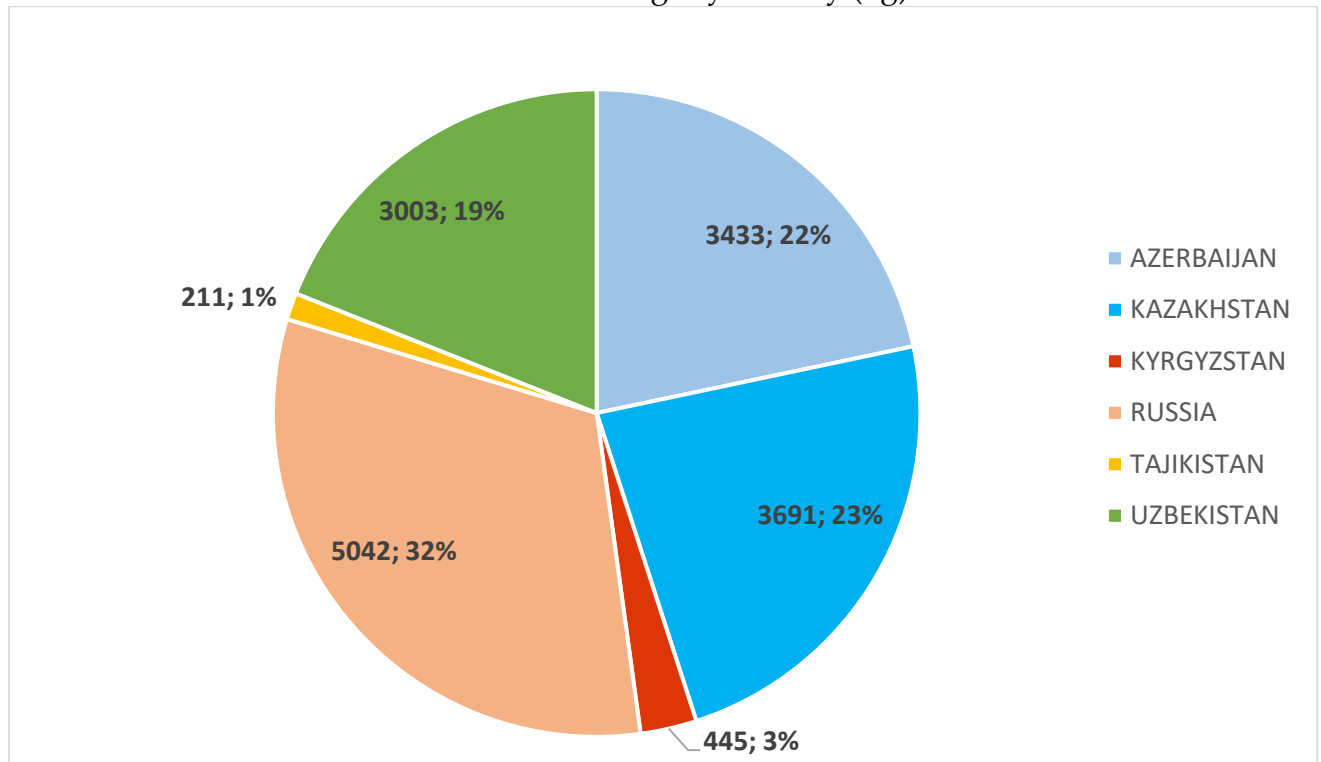
Potent substances (pregabalin, tropicamide, tramadol) account for **the remaining 8%** combined, but they play an extremely significant role in organization of drug production and as substitutes for illicit drugs.



Seizure of narcotic drugs by country (in kg)



The share of drugs by country (kg)



Geographical features

The highest number of seizures and total weight were recorded in **Russia – more than 30%** of all cases, which can be attributed to both its vast territory and vigorous law enforcement efforts. Russia is also the largest consumer market and a major production center (108 laboratories).

Kazakhstan and **Uzbekistan** show comparable figures – about **20%** each – though large shipments of marijuana and hashish are more frequently seized in Kazakhstan, while synthetic drugs and opium seizures are higher in Uzbekistan.

Azerbaijan is a key transit corridor from Iran and stands out for its high number of smuggling interdictions (77) from Iran (via the Caspian Sea and land border) as well as significant volumes of heroin and methamphetamine. These facts likely reflect its role as a transit and transshipment hub.

Kyrgyzstan and **Tajikistan** are key transit points for Afghan opium and hashish; while seizures in these countries are relatively small in terms of weight, they are extremely important for disrupting supply routes to larger countries in the region.

Main criminal indicators and threats

Table 3 – Cases of drug crime by type

Country	Previously convicted	Foreigners	Participation in a group	Smuggling	Laboratories	Distribution
AZERBAIJAN	109	30	118	77	0	105
KAZAKHSTAN	2	16	39	42	30	80
KYRGYZSTAN	1	9	29	14	6	31
RUSSIA	107	69	247	210	108	447
TAJIKISTAN	3	2	3	6	0	10
UZBEKISTAN	39	21	98	87	28	103
TOTAL	261	147	534	436	172	776

❖ **Sales** were reported in **53%** of all operations, indicating that a significant portion of seizures were intended for retail or wholesale distribution rather than personal consumption.

In many cases, contactless sales are conducted through a system of “stashers and drop-off points” using Telegram bots to take orders and cryptocurrency for payment (especially in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia).

A clear hierarchy of roles exists: supervisors, chemists, wholesale stashers (“master stashers”), retail stashers and transport drivers.

Largest seizures during distribution:

- 200 kg of hashish — in St. Petersburg (seized from a shed and a car, 16.06.2026).
- 51.56 kg of marijuana and 2,999 methadone tablets — found on a courier in Baku (26.02.2026).
- 45 kg of mephedrone and 15 kg of hashish — seized during the arrest of an interregional courier in the Tyumen region (09.04.2026).
- 40 kg of mephedrone — found on a drug dealer in the Karaganda region (28.02.2026).
There is evidence that international mail is being used for sales (cases involving Thailand). For example,
 - **21.04.2026** – smuggling of **0.7 kg of hashish**, which had arrived in an international mail package from Thailand, was prevented in Bishkek during a “controlled delivery” operation;
 - **24.03.2026** – smuggling of approximately **1 kg of marijuana (THC)** concealed in an international mail package from Thailand was intercepted in Russia; recipient was detained;
 - **08.06.2026** – a clandestine drug laboratory organized by foreign nationals was dismantled in the Chui region. Authorities seized **1.4 kg of mephedrone, 3.05 kg of hashish and 2 g of hashish oil** produced in Thailand.

❖ **Action in groups** was identified in **36%** of records, pointing to a high degree of organization and division of roles (couriers, packers, coordinators).

❖ **Smuggling** was detected in **30%** of cases, with the most active routes being: **Iran → Azerbaijan → Russia/Georgia** (marijuana, hashish, heroin, methamphetamine), **Afghanistan → Tajikistan → Uzbekistan/Kyrgyzstan** (opium group, hashish) as well as Russia ↔ Kazakhstan. This supports evidence of established transnational smuggling routes. Concealment methods are evolving: from food products (watermelons, cabbage, lettuce, kiwis, dried fruit) and technical compartments in vehicles to **UAVs** (cases recorded on the Azerbaijan-Iran border) and **intra-cavity transportation** (inside human body).

Largest seizures of contraband:

- 593 kg of hashish and 3 kg of opium — found on an excavator on the border between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan (17.05.2026).
- 190.8 kg of hashish — found in Afghan cauldrons at the Uzbekistan border (09.04.2026).
- 122 kg of marijuana — in a shipment of dill from abroad to Dagestan (04.02.2026).
- 112.53 kg of marijuana — found in a shipment of dried fruit at the Astara customs post (Azerbaijan, 03.04.2026).
- 110.3 kg of marijuana — in a shipment of watermelons from Iran to Georgia (Azerbaijan, 27.05.2026).

❖ **Laboratories** were identified in **12%** of operations, but they accounted for nearly **30%** of all synthetic drugs seized, demonstrating high efficiency of such production.

Laboratories are located in rural areas, private homes, garage spaces and even apartments.

90% of cases involved synthetic drugs (mephedrone, alpha-PVP, N-methylmephedrone, methamphetamine).

In addition to makeshift laboratories, industrial facilities were discovered with seizures amounting to tens and hundreds of kilograms of finished product and tons of precursors.

Largest seizures from laboratories:

- 97 kg of mephedrone and 5,000 liters of precursors — in the Tambov region (17.04.2026).
- 75 kg of mephedrone — at a drug laboratory in the Azov district of the Rostov Region (21.04.2026).
- 70 kg of alpha-PVP and 4 metric tons of precursors — in East Kazakhstan region (27.04.2026).
- 65.65 kg of N-methylephedrone and 175 kg of precursors — in the Ryazan region (10.03.2026).
- 52.7 kg of synthetic drugs and 59.5 liters of precursors — in Tashkent (02.03.2026).

❖ **Foreign citizens** were involved in **10%** of arrests. Foreign citizens (from Central Asia, the South Caucasus, Afghanistan, and Iran as well as citizens of European and Asian countries) are found in each of the above crime categories.

❖ **People with prior convictions** account for **18%** of cases – recidivism remains a serious risk factor. Nearly half (**49%**) of those implicated had a criminal history, and one in four (**28%**) were foreign nationals. These figures point to resilience of criminal networks, their transnational nature and influx of “personnel” from abroad.

Temporal trends

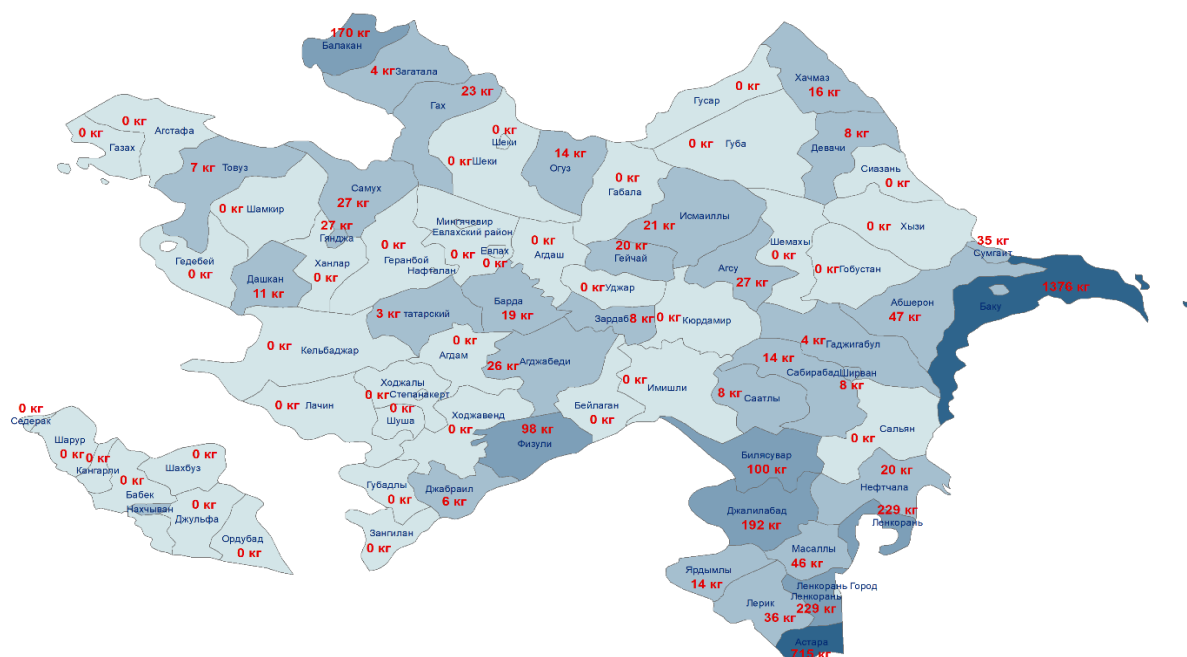
There has been a steady increase in the number of seizures from January through June, with a peak in April and May, which may be attributed both to a seasonal uptick in drug trafficking (during spring and summer) and to intensified law enforcement operations. At the same time, average weight per shipment has decreased from **15 kg** in January to **8 kg** in June, indicating a fragmentation of shipments and a shift toward smaller but more frequent stashes.

Below is an analysis and a table of seizures (in kilograms) in the 1st half of 2026 in CARICC participating countries.

REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

Region	Cannabis group	Opium group	PS	Synthetic group	Total
Aghjabadi district	24.2	1.0		1.0	26.2
Absheron district	25.6	15.0		6.9	47.5
Astara district	714.3			0.9	715.2
Akhsu district	26.7				26.7
Balaken district	169.7				169.7
Bardin district	17.7	1.0			18.7
Bilyasuvar district	70.4	26.0		4.0	100.5
Baku	1211.4	117.6	0.1	46.9	1376.0
Ganja		27.5			27.5
Sumgait	13.0				13.0
Hajigabul district	2.0	2.0			4.0
Qakh district	14.3			9.0	23.3
Goychay district	16.0	3.7		0.2	19.9
Dashkasan district	5.7	5.0			10.7
Jalilabad district	157.7	8.0		26.7	192.4
Jabrayil district	5.7			0.0	5.7
Zagatala district	2.3	2.0			4.3
Zardab district	3.0	3.0		2.0	8.0
Ismayilli district	21.3				21.3
Lankaran district	207.2	13.3		8.2	228.6
Lerik district	34.0			1.8	35.8
Masally district	32.0	14.0			46.0
Nakhchivan AR				41.6	41.6
Neftchala district	20.0				20.0
Oghuz district	14.0				14.0
Saatly district	4.0	4.0			8.0
Sabirabad district	14.0				14.0
Samukh district	23.9	3.0			26.9
Sumgait district	32.1	1.8		0.8	34.6
Tartar district	3.2				3.2
Tovuz district	6.6				6.6
Fuzuli district	80.1	10.8		6.7	97.7
Khachmaz district	16.0				16.0
Shabran district	5.6	2.0			7.6
Shirvan district	8.0				8.0
Yardimli district	14.2				14.2
Total	3015.7	260.6	0.1	156.7	3433.2

Map of drug seizures by region in the 1st half of 2026



General description

272 cases of seizures of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and potent substances were recorded in the Republic of Azerbaijan during the period from 1 January to 30 June 2026. Total weight of seizures was **3,433.16 kg**, indicating a high level of drug threat and the country's active role as a **transit corridor** between Iran, Russia, Georgia, Türkiye and other countries in the region.

Breakdown of seized substances by category

Category	Weight (kg)	Percentage of total volume
Cannabis group (marijuana, hashish, cannabis, hashish oil)	3 015,70	87,8 %
Opioid group (heroin, opium)	260,64	7,6 %
Synthetic group (methamphetamine, methadone, alpha-PVP, others)	156,73	4,6 %
Potent substances (pregabalin, etc.)	0,09	<0,1 %
Total (drugs)	3433,16	
Precursors	0	

Main finding: vast majority are **cannabis-group drugs** – marijuana and hashish. This indicates dominance of conventional plant-based drugs, imported primarily from Iran and Afghanistan. Opiates and synthetic drugs are present, but their volumes are significantly lower than those of cannabis.

Geographic distribution of seizures

Based on consolidated table by region, **the most affected districts** were identified as (top 5 by weight):

Region	Total weight (kg)	Main drugs	Nature
Baku	1 375,99	marijuana, heroin, opium, methadone, methamphetamine	distribution, storage, transportation, courier services
Astara district	715,15	marijuana, hashish, hashish resin	smuggling from Iran in transit to Russia/Georgia
Lankaran district	228,64	marijuana, heroin, methamphetamine, methadone	smuggling (UAVs, paragliders), distribution
Jalilabad district	192,39	marijuana, methamphetamine, methadone	cross-border smuggling, armed incidents
Balaken district	169,70	marijuana (cannabis)	cultivation, smuggling (watermelons)

Other significant districts: Fuzuli (97.66 kg), Nakhchivan AR (41.6 kg—liquid methamphetamine), Bilyasuvar (100.48 kg), Goychay, Masally, Samukh, and others

Finding: main “hot spot” is the **southern border with Iran** (Astara, Lankaran, Jalilabad, Bilyasuvar), where the largest shipments of contraband are intercepted. The domestic market is concentrated in **the capital and major cities** (Baku, Sumgait, Ganja), where distributors and couriers operate.

Nature of crimes

Smuggling (transit)

- **Percentage of total weight:** more than 70%.
- **Main route:** Iran → Azerbaijan → Russia / Georgia / Türkiye.
- **Concealment methods:** food products (watermelons, cabbage, lettuce, kiwis, dried fruit, cauliflower), vehicle technical cavities, double bottoms, UAVs, paragliders.
- **Largest seizures:** 112.53 kg of marijuana in a shipment labeled “dried fruit” (Astara, 03.04); 110.3 kg of marijuana in watermelons (Balaken, 27.05); 90.95 kg of marijuana in cauliflower (Astara, 25.06); 79.82 kg of marijuana in lettuce (Astara, 26.02); 58.96 kg of hashish in cabbage (Astara, 01.04).

Distribution and storage

- **More than 80 incidents** of drug sales recorded, primarily in Baku and Sumgait.
- Typical shipments range from 5 to 50 kg of marijuana, heroin, opium and methadone.
- In some cases, electronic scales and packaging materials were seized, indicating that products were packed for retail sale.

Cultivation

- **Cannabis plantations** were discovered in the Absheron (209 plants in an underground bunker), Balaken (198 plants), Ismayilli (31 plants), Salyan (101 plants) and Khachmaz (50 plants) districts.
- This indicates efforts to build **domestic production** capacity and reduce dependence on foreign supplies.

Laboratories

- Not a single case of a drug laboratory being set up was recorded during the first half of the year. This sets Azerbaijan apart from Russia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, where such laboratories are actively being detected. This may be due to the fact that main supply consists of ready-made plant-based drugs from Iran and Afghanistan, while production of synthetic drugs is not widespread.

Foreign factor

- **Iranian citizens** appear in more than 50 incidents as organizers, suppliers and coordinators.
- Citizens of other countries are also mentioned (for example, in isolated cases), but main foreign group is Iranians.
- Foreigners recruit local residents as couriers, often those with prior convictions.

People with prior convictions

- **More than 40% of incidents** involve individuals with criminal records (primarily for theft, drug crimes and murder).
- This points to a criminal network engaged in drug trafficking and to recurring nature of these crimes.

Largest seizures (Top 15)

No	Weight (kg)	Drug(s)	Date	Region	Nature of crime
1	112,53	Marijuana	03.04.2026	Astara	Smuggling (disguised as a shipment of "assorted dried fruit")
2	110,30	Marijuana	27.05.2026	Balaken	Smuggling (hidden in watermelons, Iran–Georgia transit)
3	102,53	Hashish + hashish resin	01.04.2026	Astara	Smuggling (disguised as cabbage; two shipments weighing 43.57 kg and 58.96 kg)
4	90,95	Marijuana	25.06.2026	Astara	Smuggling (in a shipment of cauliflower)
5	79,82	Marijuana	26.02.2026	Astara	Smuggling (disguised as lettuce)
6	72,00	Marijuana	09.06.2026	Baku	Distribution (seized from couriers preparing for sale)
7	71,08	Hashish, marijuana, opium, methadone	09.04.2026	Baku	Smuggling (organized by Iranian nationals; a total of 72 kg, according to reports)
8	52,76	Marijuana + methadone	26.02.2026	Baku	Smuggling, distribution (a courier was arrested with 51.56 kg of marijuana and 2,999 methadone tablets)
9	51,94	Marijuana	06.02.2026	Astara	Smuggling (in a shipment of greens)
10	51,80	Marijuana + methadone	17.06.2026	Baku	Distribution (51 kg of marijuana and 2,000 methadone tablets)
11	51,04	Marijuana, opium, methadone	27.05.2026	Bilyasuvar	Smuggling (transport via paraglider from Iran)
12	49,58	Marijuana	24.04.2026	Baku	Distribution (seized 34.88 kg + 14.7 kg from two detainees)
13	46,00	Marijuana	22.01.2026	Baku	Distribution (from two detainees)
14	45,00	Marijuana	27.05.2026	Astara	Smuggled (brought in illegally)
15	44,33	Marijuana, heroin, methamphetamine, opium	11.04.2026	Baku	Distribution (total amount seized in a single day: >44 kg)

Monthly trends

Month	Nature of events
January	13 cases, middleweight shipments (up to 29 kg), increased activity in Baku and Astara
February	Sharp increase in smuggling: 79.82 kg (26.02), 51.94 kg (06.02), 51.56 kg (26.02)
March	Major seizures of heroin (27.48 kg in Ganja) and marijuana (43.5 kg in Baku)
April	Highest weight—112.53 kg (03.04), 90.95 kg (25.06)—in Astara; also 70.88 kg in Baku
May	Activity remains high: 110.3 kg (27.05), 51 kg (17.06)
June	Large shipments are declining, but average shipment size (30–50 kg) remains steady

Conclusion: Activity peaked between February and May, which may be due to seasonal factors (harvest in Iran, weather conditions affecting transportation).

Findings

1. **Azerbaijan is a key transit point** for drug trafficking from Iran (and, indirectly, from Afghanistan) to Russia, Georgia, Türkiye and European countries. Marijuana and hashish are primary commodities.
2. **Smuggling outweighs** domestic production: no laboratories were found and cannabis cultivation is limited to small-scale, non-industrial operations.
3. **Southern border** (Astara, Lankaran, Jalilabad, Bilyasuvar) is the most vulnerable section, requiring enhanced technical and canine surveillance and UAV monitoring.
4. **Domestic market** activity is concentrated in Baku and major cities, where large shipments are stored for further distribution.
5. **Foreign influence** (primarily from Iran — accounting for more than 90% of seizures) is a systemic factor: without cutting off communication channels and supply routes, it will be difficult to reduce drug threat.
6. **Recidivism** is a serious problem: most of those arrested have prior convictions (109 out of 272 cases), which calls for intensified efforts to work with individuals released on parole and to prevent their involvement in drug trade.

Recommendations

For customs and border authorities:

- Expand utilization of **stationary X-ray systems and mobile scanners** at the “Astara,” “Yug-Astara,” “Mazymgara,” “Shakhtakhty” and other checkpoints.
- Increase the number of **canine units** and retrain them to detect drugs in food products and technical cavities.
- Deploy **UAV detection systems** in border areas and organize drone interception.

For operative units of MVD and SGB:

- Step up **focused operations** in areas where cannabis plantations and potential drug storage sites were found (forests, private properties).
- Intensify work with **individuals with prior convictions**, especially those with a history of drug offenses, through preventive counseling and ongoing support.

For international cooperation:

- Strengthen information sharing with **Iran** (regarding suppliers and distribution channels), with **Russia and Georgia** (regarding transit flows) and with **Türkiye** (regarding final destinations) through CARICC capabilities.
- Participate in international counter-narcotics operations using the “controlled delivery” method to combat transnational criminal groups under CARICC coordination.

For legislative and preventive work:

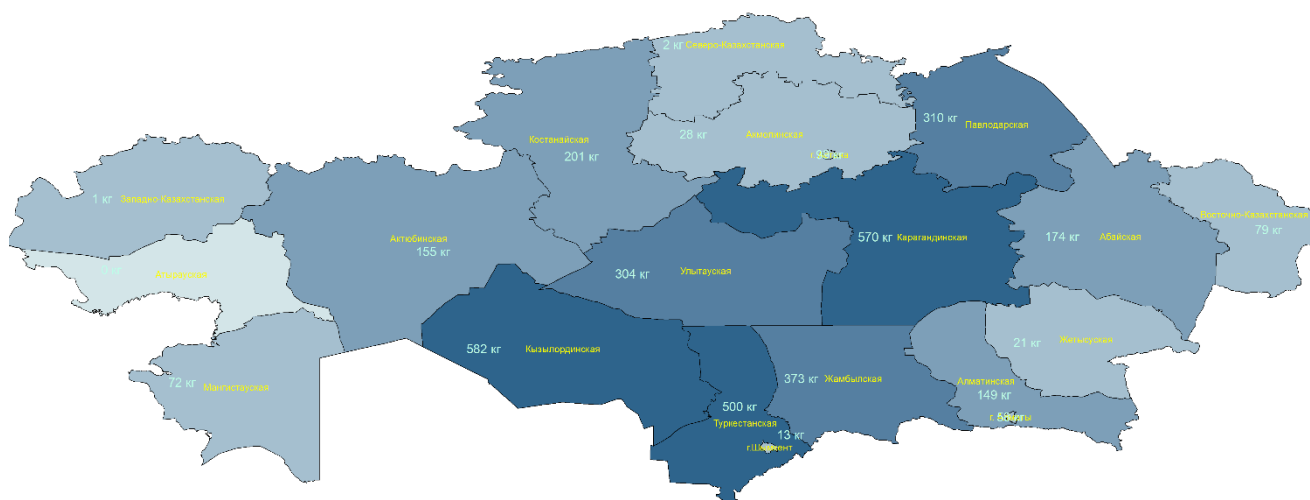
- Explore the possibility of imposing stricter penalties for smuggling using UAVs and paragliders and for operating clandestine drug farms.
- Strengthen broad **public awareness campaign** among young people about dangers of drugs and legal consequences of drug trafficking, with a particular focus on risks of recruitment via Internet.

REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

Table of drug seizures in the 1st half of 2026 (in kg)

Region	Cannabis group	Cocaine group	Opium group	Synthetic group	Total
Abai region	174			0.02	174.02
Akmola region	27.8			0.544	28.34
Aktobe region	154.7			0.506	155.21
Almaty region	100.7			48.5	149.2
East Kazakhstan region	6			73	79
Almaty	35			23.291	58.29
Astana	76.9	0.11	3.4	18.34	98.75
Shymkent	0.03		5	8.1	13.13
Zhambyl region	372.04			1.14	373.18
Zhetysu region				21.31	21.31
West Kazakhstan region				0.57	0.57
Karaganda region	5.412			564.198	569.61
Kostanay region	200		0.06	1.1	201.16
Kyzylorda region	582				582
Mangistau region	70.75		1	0.3	72.05
Pavlodar region	308.3			1.25	309.55
North Kazakhstan region	1.2			0.71	1.91
Turkestan region	0.001			500.01	500.01
Ulytau region	300			3.5	303.5
Total	2414.833	0.11	9.46	1266.384	3690.79

Map of drug seizures in the 1st half of 2026



General description

154 incidents involving seizure of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors were recorded in the Republic of Kazakhstan during the period from 1 January to 30 June 2026. Total weight of seized drugs (excluding precursors) amounted to **3,690.8 kg**, indicating a high level of drug threat. Meanwhile, volume of seized precursors reached **22,050 kg**, demonstrating active rates of illicit production of synthetic drugs within the country.

Kazakhstan serves simultaneously as a **transit corridor** (from Central Asian countries to Russia and beyond), as one of the region's **major producers** of synthetic drugs (mephedrone, alpha-PVP), and as a **consumer market** with a well-developed network of contactless distribution.

Breakdown of seized substances by category

Category	Weight (kg)	Percentage of total volume of drugs
Cannabis group (marijuana, hashish, hashish oil, cannabis)	2 414,83	65,4 %
Synthetic group (mephedrone, alpha-PVP, methamphetamine, MDMA, etc.)	1 266,38	34,3 %
Opium group (opium, opium poppy)	9,46	0,3 %
Cocaine group	0,11	<0,01 %
Total (drugs)	3 690,78	100 %
Precursors	22 050	–

Main findings:

- **Cannabis group** dominates in terms of weight due to several particularly large seizures (200–582 kg of marijuana/cannabis). However, **synthetic drugs** account for more than a third of total weight and pose the greatest danger due to high toxicity and mass production.
- **Precursors** are seized in industrial quantities (up to 5 tons per operation), which confirms existence of an established drug laboratory infrastructure.

Geographic distribution of seizures

The most affected regions (top 10 by weight of seized drugs) were identified based on aggregated data by region:

Region	Weight (kg)	Main drugs	Nature
Kyzylorda region	582,0	cannabis (plants)	cultivation and harvesting of wild cannabis
Karaganda region	569,6	mephedrone, synthetic drugs, marijuana, hashish, alpha-PVP	laboratories, distribution, transit
Turkestan region	500,0	mephedrone (liquid)	laboratory (500 kg of liquid mephedrone)
Zhambyl region	373,2	marijuana, hashish, cannabis	distribution, smuggling
Pavlodar region	309,6	marijuana (308 kg)	storage, distribution
Ulytau region	303,5	marijuana (300 kg)	smuggling from southern regions
Kostanay region	201,2	marijuana (200 kg)	transportation, storage
Abay region	174,0	marijuana, hashish oil	distribution, storage
Aktobe region	155,2	cannabis (150 kg), marijuana	cultivation, distribution
Almaty region	149,2	marijuana, alpha-PVP, hashish	laboratories, plant laboratories

Other important centers: Almaty (58.3 kg of synthetic drugs and hashish oil), Astana (98.8 kg), East Kazakhstan region (79 kg, including 70 kg of A-PVP), Mangistau region (72 kg), Akmola region (28.4 kg).

Conclusion: Main “hot spots” are **central and southern regions** (Karaganda, Zhambyl, Turkestan and Kyzylorda regions). Both large-scale laboratories and transit flows of marijuana from southern areas were detected there.

Nature of crimes

Distribution (contactless, online)

- **80 cases of drug sales** were recorded – this is a common type of crime.
- Main method: “**stash**” with coordinates shared via messaging apps.
- **Cryptocurrencies** are widely used for payments and there are **online stores** on Darkweb.
- In a number of cases, **wholesale stashers** (“warehouse operators”) were detained with shipments of up to 40 kg of mephedrone. (For example, on **28.02.2026** a clandestine drug laboratory producing synthetic drugs was dismantled in the Karaganda region. **40 kg of finished drugs (“speed”)** and about **5 tons of precursors** were seized; ringleader was arrested).

Smuggling and transit

- Smuggling was reported from **southern regions** (presumably from Central Asian countries) and from abroad (for example, 21 kg of marijuana from Southeast Asia at Almaty airport).

- Large shipments of marijuana (200–300 kg) are transported by road, often using secret compartments in trucks.

Drug laboratories (production)

- More than **30 clandestine laboratories** were dismantled in the first half of the year, a record figure.
- Laboratories are set up in **private homes, garage spaces and rented premises** in rural areas (Karaganda, Turkestan, Almaty, and East Kazakhstan regions).
- Primarily producing **mephedrone and alpha-PVP** (synthetic stimulants).
- Production volumes range from a few units to hundreds of kilograms (500 kg of liquid mephedrone in Turkestan region).
- **Tons of precursors**, purchased through shadow channels, used for synthesis.

Cannabis cultivation

- **Large cannabis plantations** recorded (up to 582 kg of plants in Kyzylorda region, 150 kg in Aktobe region and 100 kg in Zhambyl region).
- Professional cultivation methods used (grow lights, irrigation systems, ventilation systems).
- Part of cannabis is harvested from wild plants (helicopter raids).

Foreign factor

- Citizens of other countries (in Europe and Asia) are mentioned in **14 cases** as organizers, couriers or recipients of drugs.
- Cases of drugs being smuggled in from abroad were reported. (**10.06.2026** – At Almaty Airport, an attempt to smuggle **approximately 21 kg of marijuana** in luggage of a foreign national arriving from Bangkok was foiled).
- Foreign citizens are also involved in managing online stores and coordinating activities via messaging apps. Call centers were identified in Ukraine (Kyiv, Dnipro, Odesa, and Zaporizhzhia) that were coordinating a distribution network across Kazakhstan via Internet; more than 50 active members of the criminal group were detained ².

People with prior convictions

- Some of cases involve individuals with criminal records. However, proportion of such individuals is lower than in Azerbaijan, which may indicate involvement of new “recruits”.

² <https://www.inform.kz/ru/kazakhstan-iukraina-likvidirovali-opg-svyazannuyu-s-moshennicheskimi-call-tsentrami-939f5f>
<https://hronika.kz/news/policzejskie-kazahstana-i-ukrainy-presekli-v-kieve-deyatelnost-seti-call-czentrov-verbovavshih-zakladchikov/>
<https://mig.com.ua/u-zaporizhzh-pratsiuvalo-try-shakhrajski-kol-tsentry/>

Largest seizures (Top 15)

№	Weight (kg)	Drug	Region	Date	Nature of crime
1	582	Cannabis (plants)	Kyzylorda	15.06.2026	Cultivation (grown on two plots, 1,939 bushes)
2	500	Synthetic (crystalline)	Kyzylorda	06.01.2026	Drug laboratory (operating out of a private house)
3	500	Mephedrone (liquid)	Turkestan	12.05.2026	Drug laboratory (in a private house, full synthesis cycle)
4	308	Marijuana	Pavlodar	07.04.2026	Possession with intent to sell (stash in a garage)
5	300	Marijuana	Ulytau	30.03.2026	Smuggling / transportation (large-scale transit)
6	200	Marijuana	Kostanay	10.03.2026	Smuggling / transportation (hidden compartment in a truck)
7	154	Marijuana	Abay	08.05.2026	Possession with intent to sell (garage, repackaging)
8	150	Cannabis	Aktobe	30.06.2026	Cultivation (more than 500 bushes on the plot)
9	107	Marijuana	Zhambyl	09.02.2026	Distribution (organized group)
10	100	Marijuana	Zhambyl	18.02.2026	Distribution (a group of four people)
11	100	Cannabis	Zhambyl	30.06.2026	Cultivation / harvesting (wild cannabis)
12	70	Alpha-PVP	East Kazakhstan	27.04.2026	Drug laboratory (remote village, 4 tons of precursors)
13	61	Marijuana	Almaty	15.04.2026	Cultivation / laboratory (plant laboratory)
14	43,63	Marijuana	Zhambyl	13.01.2026	Smuggling / transportation (in a car on highway)
15	40	Mephedrone	Karaganda	28.02.2026	Drug laboratory

Monthly trends (summary)

Month	Main events
January	First large-scale laboratory in Karaganda (500 kg of synthetic drugs, 4 tons of precursors); marijuana seizures (43.6 kg)
February	Record cannabis seizures: 107, 100, and 200 kg of marijuana; several laboratories containing precursors; methamphetamine (8 kg)
March	200 kg of marijuana in Kostanay, 300 kg in Ulytau, 40 kg of mephedrone in Karaganda; laboratories in Shymkent
April	300 and 308 kg of marijuana; 70 kg of A-PVP in East Kazakhstan region; marijuana cultivation facilities in Almaty region (61 kg of marijuana)
May	Maximum volumes: 500 kg of liquid mephedrone in Turkestan region; 154 kg of marijuana in Abai; 70 kg of A-PVP; 18 kg of alpha-PVP in a laboratory
June	582 kg of cannabis in Kyzylorda, 28 kg of alpha-PVP in Almaty region, 150 kg of cannabis in Aktobe, 27 kg of marijuana

Conclusion: Activity increases toward spring, peaking in May and June, which is linked to cannabis cultivation season and a rise in drug trafficking.

Findings

1. **Kazakhstan** is simultaneously a producer (laboratories), a transit country and a market for drugs.
2. **Plant-based drugs** dominate in terms of weight, yet **synthetic drugs** pose a greater threat due to availability. Synthetic drugs are produced domestically on an industrial scale, as evidenced by seizure of tons of precursors.
3. **Most affected regions** include Karaganda, Turkestan, Zhambyl, Pavlodar, Ulytau and Kyzylorda regions. These locations are home to both laboratories and large warehouses containing marijuana.
4. **Distribution is fully digitized**: online stores, cryptocurrencies, messaging apps and contactless stashes. This calls for new approaches to operational work.
5. **Cannabis cultivation** is reaching alarming levels – plant seizures have reached 582 kg, indicating presence of organized plantations.
6. **Foreign involvement** in criminal groups confirms transnational nature of drug trafficking, particularly with regard to supply of precursors and distribution of large shipments.

Recommendations

For law enforcement agencies and security services:

- **Intensify regular investigative operations** to detect drug laboratories, especially in private sector, using thermal imaging cameras and drones.
- **Expand monitoring of online spaces** – Darkweb, Telegram channels, and cryptocurrency wallets – to identify organizers and distribution channels.
- **Step up aerial patrols** in regions with wild cannabis (Kyzylorda and Turkestan regions) to eradicate plantations in a timely manner.

For international cooperation:

- Activate information sharing with **Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Russia and China** regarding supply routes for precursors and synthetic drugs through CARICC capabilities.
- Participate in international counter-narcotics operations using the “controlled delivery” method to combat transnational criminal groups under CARICC coordination.

For prevention and social work:

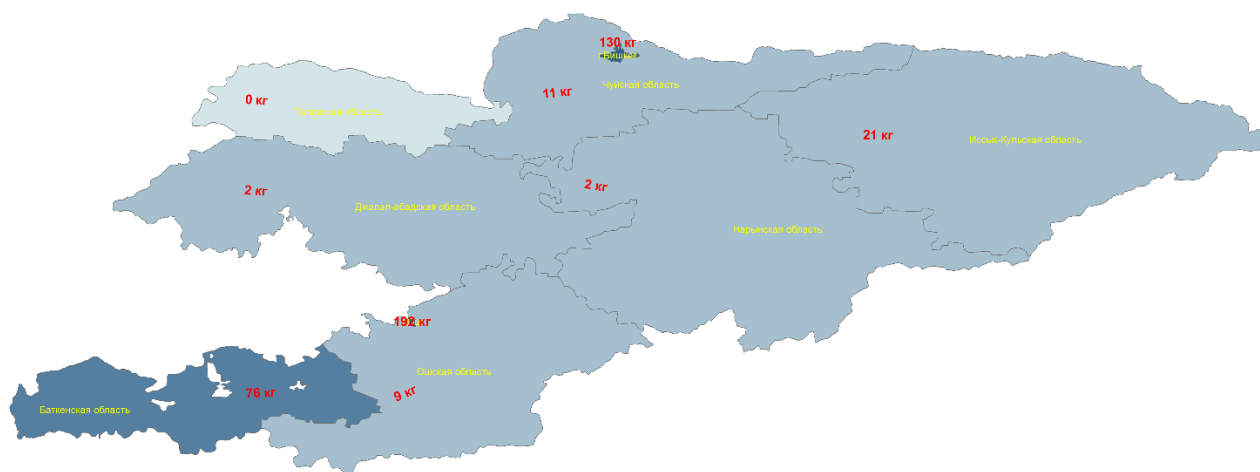
- Strengthen prevention efforts among young people, especially in cities with high rates of drug crime (Almaty, Astana, Shymkent).
- Organize a rehabilitation program for formerly convicted individuals involved in drug trade to reduce recidivism.

KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

Table of drug seizures in the 1st half of 2026 (in kg)

Region	Cannabis group	Opium group	PS	Synthetic group	Total
Batken region	57.5		18.98		76.48
Bishkek	30.15		80.05	20.21	130.41
Osh	170.7	20		1	191.7
Jalal-Abad region	1.81				1.81
Issyk-Kul region	11.18			10.04	21.22
Naryn region	2.5				2.5
Osh region	8.94				8.94
Chui region	9.96			1.54	11.5
Total	292.75	20	99.03	32.78	444.56

Map of drug seizures in the 1st half of 2026 (in kg)



General description

67 incidents involving seizure of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and potent substances were recorded in Kyrgyzstan between January and June 2026. Total weight of seized **drugs** (excluding precursors) was **~444.6 kg**. At the same time, amount of seized **precursors** reached **69.9 kg**, and that of **potent substances** (PS) reached **99 kg**, indicating a growing trade in pharmaceuticals used as psychoactive substances.

Kyrgyzstan serves as a **transit corridor** for Afghan drugs (hashish, opium) into CIS countries and as a **market** for synthetic drugs and psychotropic substances that are both imported from abroad and produced domestically (in small laboratories).

Breakdown of seized substances by category

Category	Weight (kg)	Percentage of total volume of drugs
Cannabis group (hashish, marijuana, cannabis, hashish oil)	292,75	65,8 %
Synthetic group (mephedrone, alpha-PVP, methamphetamine, Spice, 4-CMC, MDMB)	32,78	7,4 %
Opium group (opium)	20,00	4,5 %
Potent substances (pregabalin, tropicamide, halopril)	99,03	22,3 %
Total (drugs)	444,56	100 %
Precursors (hydrochloric acid, methylpropylphenone)	69,90	–

Key findings:

- **Cannabis group** – absolute leader in terms of weight, due to large shipments of hashish coming from Afghanistan via Tajikistan.
- **PS** rank second in terms of weight – these are mainly **tropicamide** (nearly 77 kg in a single operation) and **pregabalin**, which indicates that medications are being smuggled across border.
- **Synthetic drugs** account for only 7.4%, but their share is growing, and they pose a high risk due to high toxicity and availability through online stores.
- **Opium** is seized in small quantities.

Geographic distribution of seizures

Most affected regions (based on weight of seized drugs and PS, excluding precursors):

Region / city	Weight (kg)	Main drugs	Nature
Bishkek	200,3	hashish, marijuana, synthetic drugs, PS, precursors	Internet sales, smuggling, laboratories
Osh	191,7	hashish, opium, synthetic drugs	transit of Afghan drugs, distribution
Batken region	76,5	hashish, tropicamide	smuggling from Tajikistan
Issyk-Kul region	21,2	marijuana, synthetic drugs, cannabis	storage, cultivation
Chui region	11,5	hashish, marijuana, synthetic drugs, mephedrone	distribution, laboratories (foreign citizens)
Jalal-Abad region	1,8	marijuana	storage
Naryn region	2,5	marijuana	transportation

Conclusion: main hotspots include the **capital and southern regions** (Osh, Batken), through which transit flows from Afghanistan and Tajikistan pass. Distribution networks and online stores are concentrated in Bishkek (of 67 incidents, 39 occurred in Bishkek and Osh).

Nature of crimes

Smuggling and transit

- **14 cases of smuggling** were recorded — primarily hashish and opium from Afghanistan via Tajikistan (Batken and Osh regions).
- Use of **hidden compartments in vehicles, international mail** (from Thailand), **UAVs and canine units** for search operations.
- The largest operation involved the seizure of 116 kg of hashish and 20 kg of opium in Osh (9 January 2026; a transnational criminal group made up of citizens of Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan was detected).

Distribution (primarily contactless)

- **More than 30 cases of drug dealing** – this is the most common type of crime.
- **Online stores** (“K,” “Bonnie and Clyde” on 17.04.2026) are widely used, as is **cryptocurrency** for payments.
- In some cases, entire groups with defined roles (packers, stashers, coordinators) were detained.

Drug laboratories

- **6 laboratories** were dismantled in the first half of the year (in Bishkek, Chui and Issyk-Kul regions).
- Production mainly consists of **hashish oil, synthetic drugs** (mephedrone) and **PS**.
- Laboratories are organized by both local residents and foreigners.

Foreign factor

- **9 cases involving foreigners** (citizens of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, European countries and Thailand).

Group action

- **In 29 incidents**, actions were carried out as part of an organized group, indicating a high level of criminal organization.

Largest seizures (Top 10)

№	Weight (kg)	Substance	Location	Date	Nature
1	116,00	Hashish	Osh	09.01	Smuggling, transnational group
2	76,87	Tropicamide	Bishkek	30.06	Distribution via online store
3	50,00	Hashish	Osh	24.06	Smuggling from Afghanistan
4	34,45	Hashish	Batken region	03.06	Smuggling from Tajikistan
5	20,00	Opium	Osh	09.01	Smuggling, transnational group
6	18,98	Tropicamide	Batken region	23.06	Smuggling at the border with Uzbekistan
7	10,00	Synthetic drugs	Issyk-Kul region	14.04	Laboratory, group activity
8	10,00	Hashish	Bishkek	18.06	Distribution, organized group
9	9,91	Hashish	Batken region	09.06	Smuggling
10	8,94	Hashish	Osh region	18.05	Distribution

Monthly trends

Month	Main events
January	Record seizure of 116 kg of hashish and 20 kg of opium in Osh; first PS in Bishkek
February	Seizures of synthetic drugs (5 kg of alpha-PVP, 8 kg of methamphetamine), dismantling a laboratory (3.75 kg of hashish oil)
March	Medium shipments of hashish (4–7 kg), the first cases involving 4-CMC and cannabis
April	Increase in synthetic drugs (10 kg in Issyk-Kul, 2.3 kg in Bishkek), precursors (69.9 kg) and hashish smuggling (7.14 kg)
May	Active seizures of hashish (34.45 kg – Batken, 8.94 kg – Osh region, 2.21 kg – Bishkek), a laboratory operated by foreign nationals (3.05 kg of hashish, 1.4 kg of mephedrone)
June	Peak PS (76.87 kg of tropicamide), 50 kg of hashish in Osh, 10 kg of hashish in Bishkek, 9.91 kg in Batken

Conclusion: activity increases as summer approaches, particularly in smuggling of hashish and synthetic drugs. Synthetic drugs and laboratories are detected throughout the entire half-year.

Findings

1. **Kyrgyzstan remains a transit hub** for Afghan drugs (hashish, opium) traveling through Tajikistan to CIS countries. Southern regions (Osh, Batken) are most heavily affected.
2. **PS (tropicamide, pregabalin) have become a serious threat** – their share of total weight has exceeded 22%. Main channels include smuggling drugs across the border and selling through online stores.
3. **Synthetic drugs** are produced both in clandestine laboratories within the country and imported from other countries. Their share is still small, but their growth rate and toxicity are cause for concern.
4. **Cannabis cultivation** is recorded, but on a small scale (up to 4.5 kg of plants). Emphasis is placed primarily on ready-made drugs from abroad.

Recommendations

For law enforcement agencies and security services:

- **Strengthen border controls** in Batken and Osh regions by introducing X-ray scanners and canine units to inspect vehicles.
- **Expand monitoring of online platforms** (Telegram, Darkweb, cryptocurrency exchanges) to identify organizers and distribution channels.
- **Conduct regular operational measures** to identify clandestine laboratories, particularly in private sector and in rented premises.
- **Tighten controls on distribution of certain medications** (tropicamide, pregabalin, halopril) – introduce electronic tracking and restrict export across the border.

For international cooperation:

- Strengthen information sharing with **Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Russia and Kazakhstan** regarding smuggling routes and transnational groups.
- Participate in international counter-narcotics operations using the “controlled delivery” method to combat transnational criminal groups under CARICC coordination.

For prevention:

- Intensify information campaigns among young people about dangers of synthetic drugs and PS, especially in cities with high levels of drug trafficking (Bishkek, Osh).
- Organize a rehabilitation program for individuals involved in drug trafficking to reduce recidivism.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Table of drug seizures in the 1st half of 2026 (in kg)

Region	Cannabis group	Cocaine group	Opium group	PS	Synthetic group	Total
Altai Krai	15.86				14.61	30.47
Amur region	9.20				0.01	9.21
Arkhangelsk region		0.05			3.50	3.55
Astrakhan region	3.43			2.00	1.00	6.43
Bryansk region	3.02	0.25			1.84	5.11
Vladimir region	50.10				14.00	64.10
Volgograd region					3.54	3.54
Vologda region	0.96				6.93	7.89
Voronezh region	25.00		0.20		38.08	63.28
Moscow	42.63	4.50	48.00	30.20	32.44	157.77
St. Petersburg	253.76	41.80		10.61	23.23	329.40
Sevastopol	5.59				1.25	6.84
Jewish AO	7.00					7.00
Zabaikalsky Krai	10.20				1.32	11.52
Ivanovo region	7.00			2.50	22.50	32.00
Irkutsk region	6.06			0.87	5.41	12.34
Kabardino-Balkar Republic	5.80				5.61	11.41
Kaliningrad region	0.49				14.50	14.99
Kaluga region	0.03				262.00	262.03
Kamchatka Krai					0.62	0.62
Kemerovo region	7.50		0.20		24.32	32.02
Kostroma region	51.72	0.25		0.40	2.80	55.17
Krasnodar Krai	28.48	0.20		27.24	27.39	83.31
Krasnoyarsk Krai	80.06		0.68		11.45	92.19
Kurgan region	0.05				7.40	7.45
Kursk region	15.00				39.00	54.00
Leningrad region	101.75				28.52	130.27
Lipetsk region	18.10			0.10	15.28	33.48
Magadan region					0.08	0.08
Moscow region	96.98	5.00		0.15	198.99	301.12
Murmansk region	20.89				4.57	25.46
Nizhny Novgorod region	33.70				562.15	595.85
Novgorod region	1.20				30.08	31.28
Novosibirsk region	2.50	0.33	0.04	0.01	14.60	17.48
Omsk region		0.01	1.00	5.00	1.67	7.68
Orenburg region	48.02			0.11	0.81	48.94
Oryol region	3.88					3.88

Penza region	108.98			5.36	114.34
Perm Krai	0.76			31.00	31.76
Primorsky Krai	163.50	0.01		0.59	164.10
Pskov region	10.00		0.16	26.21	36.37
Republic of Adygea	1.50			0.41	1.91
Republic of Bashkortostan	0.06			1.14	1.20
Republic of Dagestan	391.00			34.85	425.85
Republic of Ingushetia	0.02	0.19		9.09	9.30
Republic of Kalmykia				8.98	8.98
Komi Republic	2.70			3.00	5.70
Republic of Crimea	2.87			3.59	6.46
Republic of Mari El				0.77	0.77
Republic of Mordovia	0.21			0.46	0.67
Sakha Republic				2.50	2.50
Republic of North Ossetia– Alania		1.42		0.63	2.05
Republic of Tatarstan	4.30			3.55	7.85
Republic of Tyva	18.50				18.50
Udmurt Republic				15.24	15.24
Republic of Khakassia				1.10	1.10
Rostov region	216.14		35.28	179.28	430.70
Ryazan region	7.66			99.43	107.08
Samara region	3.52	0.21		75.58	79.31
Saratov region	2.48	1.26		4.75	8.49
Sakhalin region	5.43	0.29		12.08	17.80
Sverdlovsk region	101.30	3.50		52.60	157.40
Smolensk region	25.05			70.90	95.95
Stavropol Krai				18.65	18.65
Tambov region	2.57	0.08	0.01	106.64	109.30
Tver region	199.24			11.85	211.09
Tomsk region		0.13			0.13
Tula region	57.92			15.79	73.71
Tyumen region		7.00		98.00	105.00
Udmurt Republic				7.50	7.50
Ulyanovsk region	2.80	0.60		10.94	14.34
Khabarovsk Krai	15.17			2.91	18.08
Khanty-Mansi AO			1.26	23.87	25.13
Chelyabinsk region	18.00			85.07	103.07
Chuvash Republic	3.09			21.20	24.29
Yaroslavl region				20.40	20.40
Total	2320.71	53.07	62.70	117.32	2487.38
				5041.19	

General description

747 incidents involving the seizure of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, potent substances and precursors were recorded in the Russian Federation between January and June 2026. Total weight of the seized **drugs** was **~3,250 kg**, and volume of seized **precursors** exceeded **18,000 kg**, indicating a high level of drug threat and enduring underground production of synthetic drugs.

Breakdown of seized substances by category

Category	Weight (kg)	Percentage of total volume of drugs
Synthetic group (mephedrone, alpha-PVP, N-methylephedrone, methadone, amphetamine, MDMA, PVP, carfentanil, etc.)	~1 900	~58 %
Cannabis group (marijuana, hashish, cannabis, hashish oil)	~1 050	~32 %
Opioid group (heroin, opium)	~80	~2,5 %
Cocaine group	~55	~1,7 %
Potent substances (PS) (pregabalin, tropicamide, tramadol, sibutramine, ketamine, psilobin)	~165	~5,8 %
Total drugs (excluding precursors)	~3 250	100 %
Precursors	~18 000	–

Main findings:

- **Synthetic drugs** account for the majority (58%) – this is the result of domestic illicit production and smuggling.
- **Cannabis group** remains a significant category (32%), but ranks behind synthetic drugs. Most seizures involve marijuana (including large seizures of 130–134 kg) and hashish (up to 200 kg in a single operation).
- **Opium group** is minimal – heroin and opium were practically replaced by synthetic alternatives and cannabis.
- **PS** is on the rise – seizures of pregabalin reached 35 kg and those of tropicamide amounted to 5 kg, suggesting an increase in illicit trade in pharmaceuticals.
- **Precursors** are seized in industrial quantities (up to 5,000 kg per operation), which confirms presence of active drug laboratories.
-

Geographic distribution of seizures

Most affected regions (based on weight of seized drugs and PS, excluding precursors):

Region	Weight (kg)	Main drugs	Nature
Moscow region	~900	mephedrone, N-methylephedrone, hashish, marijuana, pregabalin	laboratories, distribution, transit
Moscow	~350	mephedrone, cocaine, hashish, marijuana, methadone	distribution, storage, transit

Rostov region	~250	mephedrone, α -PVP, MDMA, marijuana, hashish	laboratories, distribution, group action
Samara region	~150	alpha-PVP, mephedrone, marijuana	laboratories, distribution
Krasnodar Krai	~120	mephedrone, marijuana, hashish, pregabalin	laboratories, distribution, transit
St. Petersburg and Leningrad region	~350	hashish (200 kg), mephedrone, marijuana, cocaine	smuggling, distribution, laboratories, cultivation
Tambov region	~110	mephedrone (97 kg), N-methylmephedrone	laboratory (record-breaking)
Nizhny Novgorod region	~100	alpha-PVP (500 liters, 37 kg) and mephedrone	laboratories
Tyumen region	~80	mephedrone, heroin	transit, distribution
Krasnoyarsk Krai	~60	mephedrone, marijuana, alpha-PVP, hashish	distribution, cultivation
Other regions	~600	various	scattered seizures

Conclusion: main hotspots are the **Central, Southern, and Northwestern** federal districts. Moscow region and the city of Moscow lead in the number and weight of seizures. Rostov, Samara and Tambov regions as well as St. Petersburg are main hubs for drug production and distribution.

Nature of crimes

Smuggling and transit

- **More than 80 cases of smuggling were recorded** – about 11% of total.
- Main routes: **Latin America** → **Russia** (cocaine, 40 kg in St. Petersburg), **Afghanistan** → **Russia** (heroin, 48 kg), **Belarus** → **Russia** (hashish, 14.5 kg), **Europe** → **Russia** (hashish, 10 kg from Berlin, pregabalin).
- Methods: technological cavities in containers, mail shipments, secret compartments in vehicles and concealment in household appliances and food products.
- **Largest smuggling seizures:** 40 kg of cocaine (St. Petersburg, 05.01.2026), 48 kg of heroin (Moscow region, 26.06.2026), 14.5 kg of hashish (Leningrad region, 23.04.2026), 10 kg of hashish (Pskov region, 07.05).

Distribution (contactless, via Internet)

- **More than 400 cases of drug sales** – the most common type of crime (~47%).
- “Stash” with coordinates shared via Telegram, WhatsApp and other messaging apps is predominant method.
- **Online stores** (on Darkweb), **cryptocurrency** for payment and **Telegram bots** for taking orders are widely used.
- Both retail dealers and wholesale “warehouse operators” and “master stashers” were detained with shipments of 45–65 kg of mephedrone.

Drug laboratories

- **108 laboratories** were dismantled during the first half of the year, the highest number among the countries examined.
- They primarily produce **synthetic drugs** (mephedrone, alpha-PVP, N-methylmephedrone, methadone) and **PS** (pregabalin).

- The laboratories are set up in **rented houses, garage spaces, basements and summer cottages**, often using professional equipment (reactors, mixers, vacuum pumps).
- Largest seizures from laboratories:
 - 500 kg of alpha-PVP (in liquid form) – Nizhny Novgorod region (01.03.2026)
 - 260 kg of N-methylephedrone + 1,000 liters of precursors – Kaluga region (15.01.2026)
 - 97 kg of mephedrone + 5,000 liters of precursors – Tambov region (17.04.2026)
 - 75 kg of mephedrone – Rostov region (21.04.2026)
 - 65.65 kg of N-methylephedrone – Ryazan region (10.03.2026)

Cultivation of drug-containing plants

- Cases of **cannabis** cultivation on an industrial scale were recorded (up to 104.1 kg of plants in Tver region, 60 kg in Leningrad region and 38.7 kg in Moscow region).
- Cultivation is often carried out in rented houses, apartments and greenhouses equipped with lighting, irrigation and ventilation systems.

Foreign factor

- Foreign nationals (from Central Asia, the South Caucasus, Europe, Latin America and Asia) featured in **65+ cases**.

Group action and recidivism

- **More than 200 crimes** were committed as part of organized groups (~27 %).
- **More than 100 incidents** involve individuals with criminal records (~13 %).

Largest seizures (Top 15)

№	Weight (kg)	Substance	Location	Date	Nature
1	500	Alpha-PVP (liquid)	Nizhny Novgorod region	01.03	Laboratory
2	260	N-methylephedrone	Kaluga region	15.01	Laboratory
3	200	Hashish	St. Petersburg	16.06	Distribution
4	134	Marijuana	Republic of Dagestan	24.06	Smuggling
5	130	Marijuana	Republic of Dagestan	31.01	Smuggling
6	122	Marijuana	Republic of Dagestan	04.02	Smuggling
7	97	Mephedrone	Tambov region	17.04	Laboratory
8	75	Mephedrone	Rostov region	21.04	Laboratory
9	65,65	N-methylephedrone	Ryazan region	10.03	Laboratory
10	64	Synthetic drugs	Smolensk region	13.02	Laboratory
11	51	Alpha-PVP	Samara region	03.02	Laboratory
12	48	Heroin	Moscow	26.06	Smuggling
13	45	Mephedrone	Tyumen region	09.04	Distribution, transit
14	40	Cocaine	St. Petersburg	05.01	Smuggling
15	40	Marijuana	Tver region	13.02	Cultivation

Monthly trends

Month	Main events
January	Record seizures: 260 kg of N-methylephedrone, 40 kg of cocaine, 32.28 kg of mephedrone; first laboratories and major distribution groups
February	Peak cultivation (40 kg of marijuana, 38.7 kg of cannabis), synthetic drug seizures (51, 64, 20 kg), active laboratories
March	Maximum volumes: 500 kg of alpha-PVP, 97 kg of mephedrone, 65.65 kg of N-methylmephedrone, 45 kg of mephedrone; rise of drug laboratories
April	Large-scale seizures continue: 75, 38, 30, and 20 kg of mephedrone; increase in PS (pregabalin up to 35 kg)
May	PS reach a peak (pregabalin up to 10 kg, tropicamide 5 kg); seizures of hashish (15 kg) and marijuana; laboratories
June	Largest drug smuggling (134 kg of marijuana, 48 kg of heroin), 200 kg of hashish in St. Petersburg, laboratories and distribution

Conclusion: activity increases toward spring, peaking in February–March (laboratories and synthetic drugs) and in June (smuggling and large-scale distribution operations).

Findings

1. Synthetic drugs account for 58% of all seizures **in Russia** and more than 100 laboratories were dismantled.
2. **Drug laboratories operate on an industrial scale** – seizures of up to 500 kg of substance and tons of precursors indicate large-scale domestic production.
3. **PS (pregabalin, tropicamide) are becoming a serious threat** – their share of total weight exceeds 5% and in some shipments reaches 35 kg.
4. **Smuggling remains a significant channel** – cocaine from Latin America (20 kg), hashish from Europe and Belarus (200 kg).
5. **Distribution is fully digitized:** Telegram, cryptocurrencies and stashes.
6. **Geography of damage** – situation is most severe in Moscow region, St. Petersburg, Rostov, Samara, Tambov and Nizhny Novgorod regions.

Recommendations

For law enforcement and customs authorities:

- **Strengthen controls over precursors** – introduce electronic tracking of purchases and movements and impose stricter penalties for theft of chemical reagents.

- **Conduct regular investigative operations** to identify drug laboratories, particularly in private sector and in rented premises, using thermal imaging cameras and UAVs.
- **Tighten controls on distribution of certain medications** (pregabalin, tropicamide, tramadol) – introduce electronic tracking and restrict sales at pharmacies.
- **Strengthen customs controls** at borders with Belarus and Kazakhstan and at seaports (St. Petersburg, Vladivostok) to block smuggling routes.

For international cooperation:

- Strengthen information sharing with **Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan** regarding smuggling routes and transnational groups through CARICC capabilities.
- Join international counter-narcotics operations using the “controlled delivery” method to combat transnational criminal groups under CARICC coordination.

For prevention and social work:

- Run information campaigns targeting young people about dangers of synthetic drugs and PS, especially in major cities.
- Organize a rehabilitation program for individuals involved in drug trafficking to reduce recidivism.

REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

Tajikistan remains one of the main transit routes for Afghan drugs (primarily hashish, opium, and heroin) into Central Asia and Russia.

Southern border (Khatlon region) — the most vulnerable section. Smuggling is organized and often involves armed groups, with participation of Afghan citizens.

Synthetic drugs are still insignificant in terms of volume, but their emergence points to a possible expansion in the future.

International nature of drug trafficking is evidenced by the involvement of citizens of Afghanistan and Central Asia and transit through other CIS countries. Effective countermeasures are achievable only through close coordination with neighboring states.

CARICC recommendations

For law enforcement and border control agencies:

- **Strengthen border control** along the Afghan-Tajik border (Khatlon region) by deploying modern surveillance equipment (UAVs, thermal imaging cameras, stationary radars) to detect nighttime crossings.
- **Carry out joint operations** with Afghan forces (where possible) to intercept supply routes on the side of Afghanistan.
- **Increase the number of canine units** at border crossings to inspect vehicles and cargo.

For operational units:

- **Intensify monitoring of social media and messaging apps** (Telegram, WhatsApp, Instagram) to identify drug dealers and organizers of drug distribution.
- **Conduct regular law enforcement operations** to seize drugs from stashes in Dushanbe and other cities.

For international cooperation:

- Strengthen information sharing with **Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan** regarding transit routes and distribution channels through CARICC capabilities.
- Participate in international counter-narcotics operations using the “controlled delivery” method to combat transnational criminal groups under **CARICC** coordination.

For prevention:

- Intensify preventive efforts among population in border regions, explaining consequences of facilitating smuggling.
- Organize a reintegration program for individuals involved in drug trafficking with the aim of reducing recidivism.

REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN

Table of drug seizures in the 1st half of 2026 (in kg)

Region	Cannabis group	Opium group	PS	Synthetic group	Total
Andijan region	33.98	1.02	2.99	27.01	65.01
Bukhara region	205.98	25.99		0.03	232
Tashkent	137.36	30.84	935.40	73.66	1177.27
Jizzakh region	0.36				0.357
Kashkadarya region	68.35	4.6		0.02	72.97
Navoi region	0.6	61.68		0.007	62.29
Namangan region	45.25	1.12	0.75		47.12
Republic of Karakalpakstan	0.02				0.02
Samarkand region	30.88	50.66	0.11	0.08	81.73
Surkhandarya region	867.0	30.96			897.96
Syrdarya region		62.77	4.51		67.28
Tashkent region	40.23	14.25	6.69	15.78	76.95
Fergana region	100.68	73.99	44.34	0.22	219.23
Khorezm region	0.63	2.35		0.3	3.28
Total	1531.31	360.24	994.80	117.11	3003.46

Map of drug seizures in the 1st half of 2026 (in kg)



General description

215 incidents involving seizure of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, potent substances and precursors were recorded in Uzbekistan from January through June 2026. Total weight of seized **drugs** (excluding precursors) was **~2,150 kg**, while volume of seized **precursors** exceeded **1,710 kg**.

This indicates high level of drug threat and Uzbekistan's role as a **transit corridor** (from Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan), a **producer** of synthetic drugs and a **market** for potent pharmaceuticals, as confirmed by the following facts:

– *Afghanistan → Uzbekistan: 2026.05.17, Hashish, 593 kg; 2026.03.24, Hashish, 72.3 kg; 2026.04.09, Hashish, 190.8 kg.*

– *Tajikistan → Uzbekistan: 2026.01.06, opium, 9.98 kg; 2026.03.10, opium, 14.68 kg; 2026.03.10, opium, 54.46 kg.*

– *Kyrgyzstan → Uzbekistan: 2026.02.14., Hashish, 9.48 kg; 2026.04.22., Hashish, 24.5 kg; 2026.05.12., Regapen, 9.2 kg; 2026.05.12., Tropicamide, 9.25 kg; 2026.03.13., Zardex, 2.996 kg.*

Breakdown of seized substances by category

Category	Weight (kg)	Percentage of total volume of drugs
Cannabis group (hashish, marijuana, cannabis, hashish oil)	~1 100	~51 %
Opium group (opium, heroin, poppy straw, opium poppy)	~350	~16 %
Synthetic group (mephedrone, alpha-PVP, methamphetamine, spice, MDMA, clephedrone, etc.)	~150	~7 %
Potent substances (pregabalin, tropicamide, Regapen, Zardex, sibutramine, etc.)	~550	~26 %
Total (drugs)	~2 150	100 %
Precursors	~1 710	–

Main findings:

- **Cannabis group** tops the list in terms of weight due to several massive hashish seizures (593 kg, 190.8 kg, 72.3 kg, etc.), reflecting heavy transit of Afghan hashish across southern border.
- **PS** rank second – these are primarily **pregabalin** (seizures of up to 200 kg) and **tropicamide** (up to 15.45 kg per operation), which indicates large-scale illicit trafficking of pharmaceuticals.
- **Opium group** (opium, heroin) is also significant – more than 350 kg, mostly smuggled from Afghanistan and Tajikistan.
- **Synthetic drugs** account for about 7%.

Geographic distribution of seizures

Most affected regions (based on weight of seized drugs and PS, excluding precursors):

Region	Weight (kg)	Main drugs	Nature
Surkhandarya region	~850	hashish, opium, heroin	smuggling from Afghanistan, transit
Fergana region	~500	hashish, opium, heroin, PS	smuggling, distribution, laboratories
Tashkent	~350	hashish, synthetic drugs, PS, precursors	Internet distribution, laboratories
Samarkand region	~120	opium, hashish, heroin	smuggling from Tajikistan, distribution
Tashkent region	~100	hashish, synthetic drugs, PS	transit, laboratories
Kashkadarya region	~80	marijuana, opium, hashish	distribution, storage
Namangan region	~60	Hashish	smuggling from Kyrgyzstan
Andijan region	~50	hashish, mephedrone	smuggling, laboratories
Bukhara region	~40	heroin, opium, cannabis	transit, cultivation
Khorezm region	~30	opium, hashish, mephedrone	distribution, storage

Conclusion: main centers are **southern and eastern regions** bordering Afghanistan (Surkhandarya), Tajikistan (Samarkand, Surkhandarya) and Kyrgyzstan (Fergana Valley, Andijan, Namangan). Capital and its surrounding region serve as centers for distribution and laboratory production.

Nature of crimes

Smuggling and transit

- **More than 80 cases of smuggling were recorded** – about 40% of total.
- Main routes: **Afghanistan** → **Uzbekistan** (via Surkhandarya), **Tajikistan** → **Uzbekistan** (via Samarkand, Syrdarya), **Kyrgyzstan** → **Uzbekistan** (Fergana Valley).
- Methods: concealment in cargo (potatoes, cauldrons, excavators), technical compartments of vehicles, transport inside vehicle compartments, smuggling across rivers (the Amu Darya and Syr Darya) and using boats.
- **Largest smuggling seizures:** 593 kg of hashish in an excavator (17.05.2026), 190.8 kg of hashish in cauldrons (09.04.2026), 72.3 kg of hashish in potatoes (24.03.2026), 54.46 kg of opium (10.03.2026), 13 kg of heroin (02.06.2026).

Distribution (primarily contactless)

- **More than 100 cases of drug sales** – the most common type of crime.
- **Online stores** (drug shops), **cryptocurrency** for payment and **Telegram bots** for taking orders are used actively.
- Both retail dealers and wholesale “warehouse operators” were detained with shipments of up to 26 kg of mephedrone. For example,

Online trading (Telegram):

- organization of a Telegram bot for selling mephedrone and marijuana (Kashkadarya);
- sale of mephedrone via Telegram channels with payment by bank card (Navoi, Tashkent);
- drug shop with a Telegram bot; 15 g of mephedrone, 50 g of hashish and 21 g of cannabis oil seized.

Caching activities (stashes):

- distribution of 20 packets of mephedrone via stashes (Tashkent);
- a packet of synthetic drugs distributed via stashes (Tashkent);
- packaging and stashing hashish and heroin on orders from Telegram handlers;
- 20 packets of hashish and 37 packets of other substances, ready to be stashed.

Drug laboratories

- **28 laboratories** were dismantled during the first half of the year.
- They primarily produce **synthetic drugs** (mephedrone, alpha-PVP) and **PS** (pregabalin, tropicamide).
- Largest seizures from laboratories: 52.7 kg of synthetic drugs + precursors (02.03.2026), 26 kg of mephedrone (12.02.2026), 9.18 kg of pregabalin (23.04.2026), 6 kg of pregabalin (23.04.2026, 18.05.2026), 3.5 kg of pregabalin (27.03.2026).

Cultivation of drug-containing plants

- Cases of **cannabis** cultivation (up to 600 plants, 189 kg of plants in Bukhara region) and opium **poppy** cultivation (616 plants in Navoi region) were recorded.
- Cultivation is localized, but occurs in various regions.

Foreign factor

- Foreign nationals (from Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Türkiye and other countries) appear in **21 cases**. (Table 3)

Group action and recidivism

- **98 cases** were committed by organized groups.
- **39 incidents** involved individuals with prior convictions, indicating a criminal environment and recidivism. (Table 3)

Largest seizures (Top 10)

№	Weight (kg)	Substance	Location	Date	Nature
1	593,00	Hashish	Surkhandarya region	17.05	Smuggling from Afghanistan (in an excavator)
2	200,00	Pregabalin	Tashkent	18.05	Distribution via online store
3	190,80	Hashish	Surkhandarya region	09.04	Smuggling (in cauldrons)
4	72,30	Hashish	Surkhandarya region	24.03	Smuggling (in potatoes)
5	64,00	Hashish	Tashkent	19.03	Distribution, organized group
6	54,46	Opium	Syrdarya region	10.03	Smuggling from Tajikistan
7	52,70	Synthetic drugs	Tashkent	02.03	Laboratory, distribution
8	47,00	Hashish	Fergana region	18.04	Smuggling
9	45,77	Hashish	Kashkadarya region	01.05	Distribution, recidivism
10	26,00	Mephedrone	Andijan region	12.02	Laboratory

Monthly trends

Month	Main events
January	Active seizures of opium and hashish in Fergana region; first laboratories (Syrdarya); start of PS smuggling
February	Record seizures: 26 kg of mephedrone, 190.8 kg of hashish and large shipments of synthetic drugs; several laboratories dismantled
March	Smuggling at its peak: 72.3 kg of hashish, 54.46 kg of opium and 52.7 kg of synthetic drugs; increased distribution via stashes
April	Largest seizure of 593 kg of hashish; increase in PS (pregabalin up to 9 kg); laboratories in Tashkent and the region
May	PS reach a record high (200 kg of pregabalin, 15.45 kg of tropicamide); large-scale smuggling operations continue
June	Smuggling and trafficking remain at high levels; seizures of hashish, opium and synthetic drugs; laboratories

Conclusion: activity increases toward spring, peaking in February–March (large smuggling shipments) and in May (PS). Law enforcement agencies also step up their operational work.

Findings

1. **Uzbekistan** serves as a transit corridor for Afghan hashish, opium, and heroin. There are also reports of synthetic drug production and drug trafficking in the country.
2. **PS have become a serious threat** – they account for more than 25% of total weight. Main channels include smuggling of drugs from Kyrgyzstan and other countries and underground production within the country.
3. **Synthetic drugs** are produced in laboratories, often in capital as well as in Andijan and Syrdarya regions. Production volumes reach tens of kilograms.
4. **Foreign involvement and transnational groups** – a systemic factor. Supplies are coordinated via messaging apps with participation of citizens of Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and other countries.
5. **Cultivation of drug-containing plants** (cannabis, opium poppy) is present but not widespread – main focus is on finished drugs and synthetic drugs.

Recommendations

For law enforcement and customs authorities:

- **Expand monitoring of online platforms** (Telegram, WhatsApp, Darkweb, cryptocurrency wallets) to identify organizers and distribution channels.
- **Conduct regular investigative operations** to detect drug laboratories, particularly in private sector and in rented premises, using thermal imaging cameras and UAVs.

For international cooperation:

- Strengthen information sharing with **Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Kazakhstan** regarding smuggling routes and transnational groups through CARICC capabilities.
- Participate in international counter-narcotics operations using the “controlled delivery” method to combat transnational criminal groups under **CARICC** coordination.

For prevention and social work:

- Intensify public awareness campaigns among young people about dangers of synthetic drugs and PS, especially in cities with high levels of drug dealing (Tashkent, Fergana, Samarkand).
- Organize a rehabilitation system for individuals involved in drug trafficking to reduce recidivism.

GENERAL FINDINGS

Main threats and general trends

- **Synthetic drugs** (mephedrone, alpha-PVP, methamphetamine) account for the majority of seizures (35–58%). The number of clandestine laboratories and the volume of seized precursors are on the rise, indicating a shift toward domestic production within countries of the region.
- **Smuggling** remains primary route for import of Afghan opium, heroin and hashish through Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan as well as Iranian hashish through Azerbaijan. Concealment methods are becoming more sophisticated (food products, technical cavities, UAVs, and intra-cavity transport).
- **Trafficking of potent substances** (pregabalin, tropicamide, etc.) is emerging as a serious new threat: large shipments are being seized both as contraband and from clandestine production facilities.
- **Cannabis plantations** are being documented, including those that use professional greenhouses and bunkers.
- **Transnational nature** of crime is confirmed by involvement of citizens from several countries (Afghanistan, Iran, Central Asian states, Russia and the EU). High level of recidivism indicates a persistent criminal environment.

General recommendations for countries in the region

Strengthen border and customs controls: introduce stationary and mobile scanners, endoscopes, expand canine units, intercept UAVs and inspect mail and cargo shipments.

Actively combat drug laboratories: implement electronic tracking of precursors, impose stricter penalties for theft, conduct regular raids using thermal imaging cameras and UAVs and establish interagency rapid-response teams.

Counter digital drug sales by monitoring Telegram, WhatsApp, Darkweb and cryptocurrencies; develop cyber units; and block drug bots and channels in collaboration with platforms.

Tighten controls on distribution of potent drugs: introduce electronic tracking of prescription drugs and strengthen regulations governing import and export of medicines.

Actively utilize available effective regional cooperation mechanisms, such as CARICC and others, to facilitate timely exchange of information and practical experience, and to organize joint counter-narcotics operations using the “controlled delivery” method aimed at cracking down on criminal activities of transnational organized groups.

Conclusion

Drug situation in the region remains complex and dynamic. Success in countering drug threat depends on **coordinated efforts by all countries**, exchange of intelligence, introduction of modern technical equipment, active use of digital methods in combating crime and regional cooperation mechanisms.

Only a holistic approach, combining strict law enforcement measures with prevention and international cooperation, will make it possible to reverse negative trends and reduce scale of drug use and drug trafficking in CARICC participating countries and neighboring regions.

The “Trans-Caspian International Transport Route” (Middle Corridor) calls for special attention, as its development is accompanied by growth in freight volumes and international trade. Considering the expansion of transportation and logistics infrastructure and increase in cargo traffic, there is a growing likelihood that organized criminal groups will use this corridor to smuggle narcotics, psychotropic substances, precursors and other prohibited items. Therefore, it appears necessary to strengthen international information sharing, implement early-warning systems using artificial intelligence technologies and conduct joint international operations and measures to identify and counter drug trafficking routes not only along the “Northern Corridor” but also along the “Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor”.

CARICC

This document was prepared based on data from CARICC seizure reports for January–June 2026 and presents general findings for six countries under analysis.