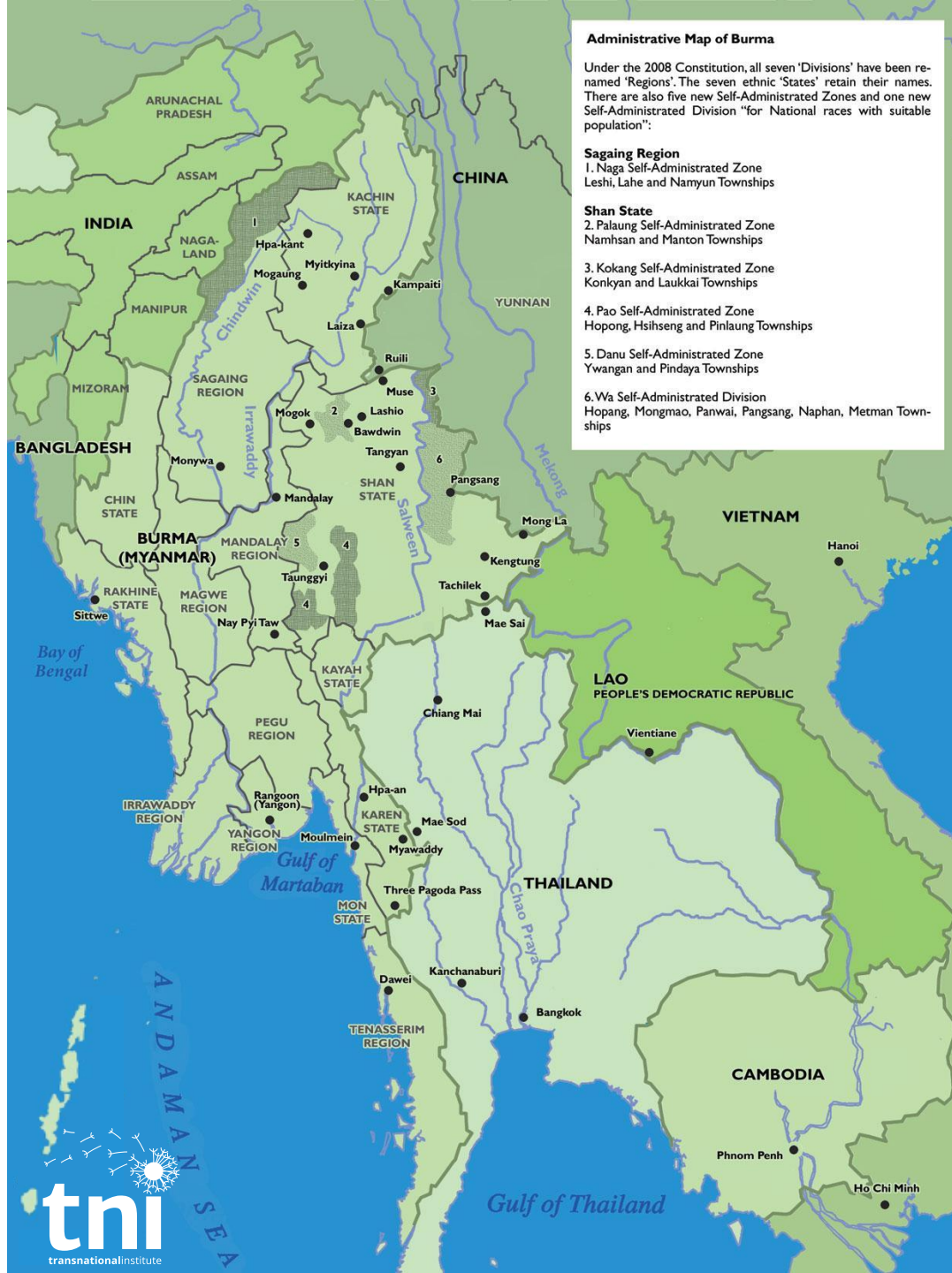


Counternarcotics Policy and Drug Reform Debates in Myanmar

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Administrative Map of Burma

Under the 2008 Constitution, all seven 'Divisions' have been re-named 'Regions'. The seven ethnic 'States' retain their names. There are also five new Self-Administered Zones and one new Self-Administered Division "for National races with suitable population":

- Sagaing Region**
 - 1. Naga Self-Administered Zone
Leshi, Lahe and Namyun Townships
- Shan State**
 - 2. Palaung Self-Administered Zone
Namhsan and Manton Townships
 - 3. Kokang Self-Administered Zone
Konkyan and Laukkai Townships
 - 4. Pao Self-Administered Zone
Hopong, Hsihseng and Pinlaung Townships
 - 5. Danu Self-Administered Zone
Ywangan and Pindaya Townships
 - 6. Wa Self-Administered Division
Hopang, Mongmao, Panwai, Pangsang, Naphan, Metman Townships

Relevance for China?

- Most opium grown in Shan State near China border
- Large quantity of heroin produced in Myanmar exported to China
- Precursors heroin imported from China
- Ethnic Chinese criminal networks involvement in regional drug trade
- China implements opium substitution programme in Myanmar
- China involved in peace process in Myanmar

Myanmar background

- Decades of ethnic conflict and civil war
- Military rule since 1962
- Many ethnic armed opposition groups
- Large number of militia groups under control Myanmar army
- Poor country
- Sanctions by West; good relations with China
- Political reform process since 2011
- End of Western isolation; deterioration relations with China – fighting along the border

Drug issues in Myanmar - production

- 2nd largest producer of opium in world, after Afghanistan
- After decade of decline, opium cultivation tripled since 2006
- Most of it turned into heroin, exported to neighbouring countries, mainly China
- Large production of ATS – mainly methamphetamines, including for export





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Drugs use issues - consumption

- Traditional opium use – recreational, medicinal and cultural use – often non-problematic
- Shift from smoking opium to smoking heroin to injecting heroin
- Large numbers of injecting heroin users
- Many of them infected with HIV and Hep C.
- Large scale ATS use



Drivers of opium cultivation

- Most growers are impoverished ethnic minorities; address food insecurity and buy access to basic household items
- Access to health and education
- Medicinal use in areas with no access essential medicines
- Traditional non-problematic use
- Decades of ethnic conflict and civil war
- Access to credit & market
- Demand from the region (China)









Heroin production

- Mostly in northern Shan State
- Chemical precursors imported from China and India
- Now mainly produced by militia groups controlled by Myanmar army ('managing conflict')
- Some militia leaders accused of involvement drug trade in Parliament
- Security = first concern (not drugs)

Drug trafficking

- Many links between drugs and conflict
- Many conflict actors involved (including Myanmar Army) – few have clean hands
- Blame political opponents or ‘kings of opium’ (Khun Sa) and ‘narco armies’ (UWSA) = convenient
- Ignores corruption and involvement in the region
- Financed and controlled by ethnic Chinese groups from abroad (now smaller groups)





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出城 禁止車馬通行

城隍廟

Pressure on Myanmar

- From China: opium bans ethnic groups along border
- ASEAN drug free deadline 2015
- Myanmar drug free deadline postponed to 2019
- Thailand: export of ATS (but precursors imported via Thailand)
- Less pressure from US – now most heroin on US market from Latin America + Afghanistan
- Domestic: HIV epidemic among IDUs

United Government of Myanmar
Wa Central Authority Of Myanmar
Political&Justice Committee
Of Sumao City, Yunnan, China
United Nations Office On Drugs &
Crime/Wa Project
World Food Programme
An On The Spot Report Of Jointed
Ceremony On Drugs Burning And
Poppy Fields Slashing

缅甸联邦政府、缅甸第二特区(佤邦)人民政府
中国云南省思茅市政法委、联合国禁毒署、联合国粮食计划署
联合扫毒行动纪实

禁毒·纪实

缅甸佤邦联合党中央政工部编印

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Current Government Policy

- Strict drugs laws and harsh policies
- Long sentences for drugs use and small trafficking – many in jail, overcrowding
- Very few large dealers arrested – some MP
- Few quality services for drug users
- Eradication of poppy fields but limited access to AD programmes for opium farmers
- Lack of resources
- Drug Free by 2019?

China's Opium Substitution Policy

- Promote Chinese companies to invest in mono-plantations in northern Myanmar (and Laos) – especially rubber
- Tax returns, loans and import quota's
- Mainly benefits Chinese companies and local authorities
- No benefits for (ex)poppy farmers – losing access to land and livelihoods
- Dependent on rubber (prices down)
- Environmental consequences mono-cropping



AD Principles and Practices

- Development first
- No eradication before alternative livelihoods are in place
- Community-based approach
- Involvement of farmers
- Holistic approach – addressing poverty in widest sense of the term
- But resources limited – very little international support for AD in Myanmar

Challenges for Myanmar

- Continuing conflict (along China border)
- Myanmar army priority is security (not drugs)
- Drug free deadline + unachievable targets
- Focus on law enforcement
- Lack of resources
- Resistance to harm reduction
- Little support for AD
- No services for problematic ATS users

Recommendations

- Development led approach to problems related to illicit opium cultivation
- Health oriented approach to address drug use related problems
- Involvement affected communities (drug users and opium farmers)
- Towards achievable objectives
- Inclusive peace process and political dialogue