



منتدى الاستراتيجيات الأردني
JORDAN STRATEGY FORUM

International Day Against Drug Abuse: The Reality in Jordan

June 2023





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The Jordan Strategy Forum (JSF) is a not-for-profit organization, which represents a group of Jordanian private sector companies that are active in corporate and social responsibility (CSR) and in promoting Jordan's economic growth. JSF's members are active private sector institutions, who demonstrate a genuine will to be part of a dialogue on economic and social issues that concern Jordanian citizens. The Jordan Strategy Forum promotes a strong Jordanian private sector that is profitable, employs Jordanians, pays taxes and supports comprehensive economic growth in Jordan.

The JSF also offers a rare opportunity and space for the private sector to have evidence-based debate with the public sector and decision-makers with the aim to increase awareness, strengthening the future of the Jordanian economy and applying best practices.

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Knowledge is Power Report: It is a report that presents facts, figures, and observations from various sources on a specific topic within one report.

The Jordan Strategy Forum (JSF) is pleased to make this publication available to all users to benefit and quote from provided that they the JSF is explicitly and properly cited as the reference.

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1. Introduction:

“Drug Abuse” is a major global problem. Today, there is no country in the world which is free from drug abuse. Drug abuse has many direct and indirect socio-economic implications. Indeed, the impact of drug involves the family, workplace, societies, and economies at large. The following are the most important negative impacts of drug abuse:

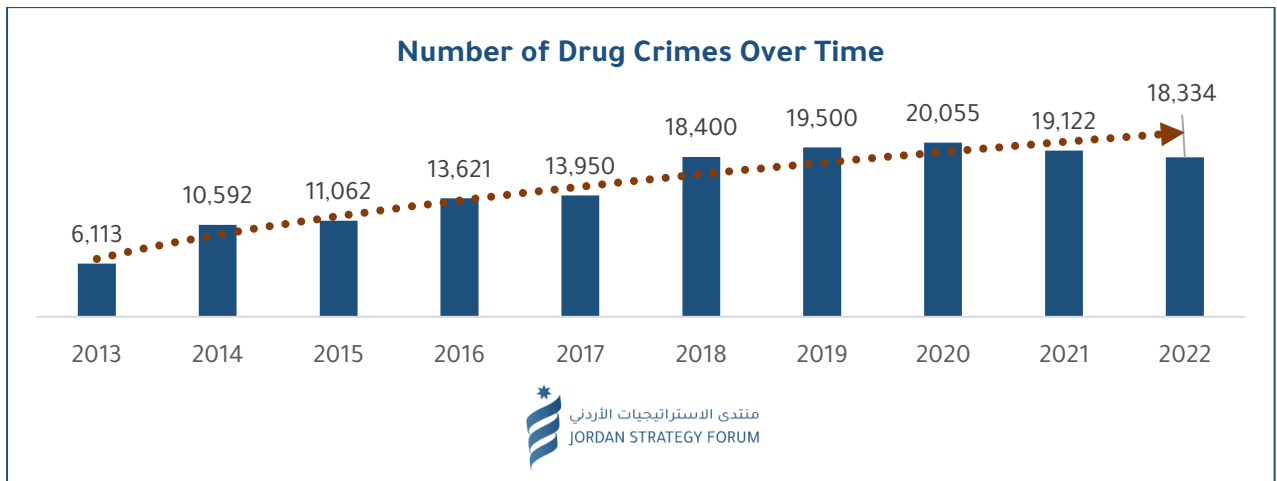
1. **The health sector.** The health sector is one of the sectors most affected by drug abuse. From an economic point of view, countries are redirecting part of the national allocations directed to support and improve health services to cover the costs of drug abuse prevention and treatment of addiction (including psychological treatment resulting from the frustration and despair of drug abuse). In addition, pressure on health facilities across the country increases, as demand for hospital beds by drug abusers and victims of drug crimes increases.
2. Individuals under the influence of drugs also pose major safety risks and costs to people around them. In fact, drugs cause many traffic accidents that are dangerous and sometimes fatal. In addition, one would expect a direct link between drugs and crime.
3. Drug abuse causes loss in productivity. People under the influence of drugs cannot function as efficiently as others. The cumulative cost of lost productivity can be high.
4. Drug abuse can deplete the income of users, and hence, negatively affect the quality of life of their family members.
5. The illicit manufacture and disposal of drugs cause significant environmental contamination.

Drug abuse entails costly burdens on the individual, the family, the society, and the economy at the same time. This prompts governments all over the world to work diligently to eradicate drug abuse. Typically, this is done by raising awareness in schools and reaching out to youth outside schools and high-risk groups. Furthermore, governments work to combat trafficking and drug abuse, and strengthen the role of reform and rehabilitation centers to treat addicts.

Relative to the above-mentioned observations, and on the occasion of the United Nations’ **“International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking”** (26th of June), the primary objective of this **“Knowledge is Power”** report, issued by the Jordan Strategy Forum (JSF), is to shed some light on **“Drug Crimes”** in Jordan during the past few years.

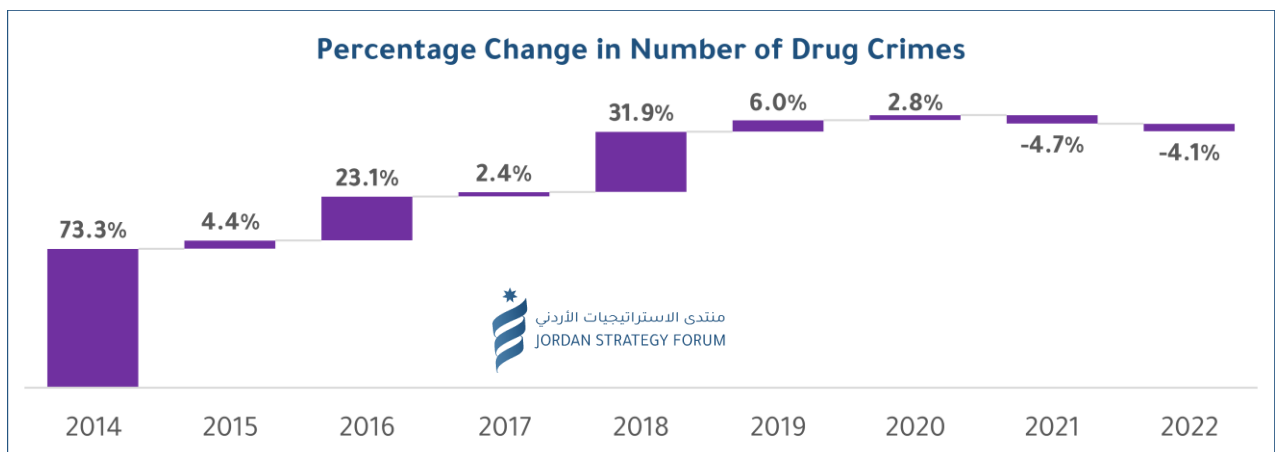
2. The reality of drug crimes in Jordan

1. The statistics of the Public Security Directorate indicate that drug crimes have increased significantly over the past ten years, reaching about 18.3 thousand crimes in 2022, between drug use, possession, and trafficking. Although it declined compared to the previous year at a rate of 4.1%.



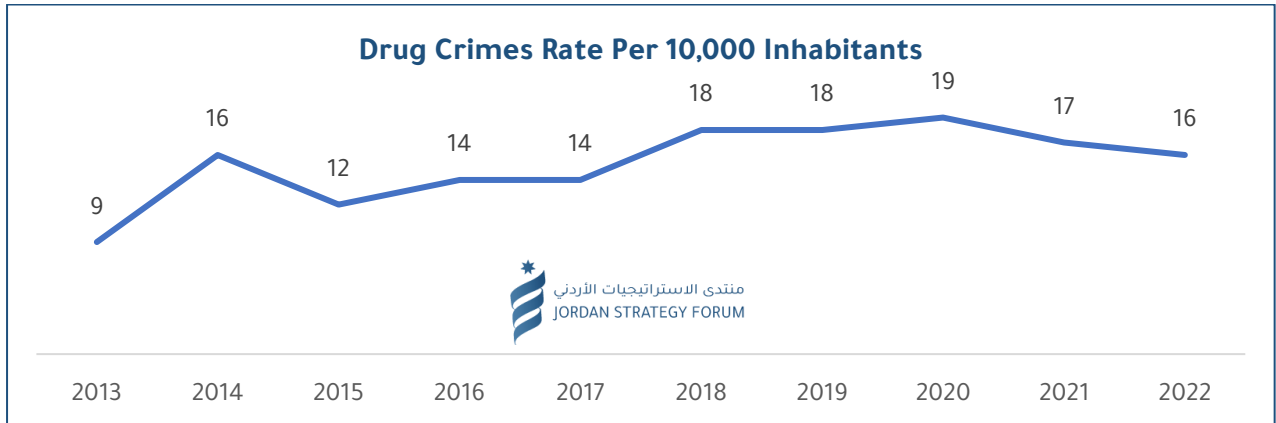
Source: Public Security Directorate, Criminal Statistical Report, 2022

2. Over the past ten years, 2014 recorded the highest growth rate in such crimes, at a rate of 73.3% compared to 2013. It is worth noting that, during the past two years 2021 and 2022, drug crimes recorded a decline at a rate of -4.7% and -4.1%, respectively. This decline is a positive reflection of the effort by the various concerned authorities - especially Anti-Narcotics Department (Public Security Directorate).



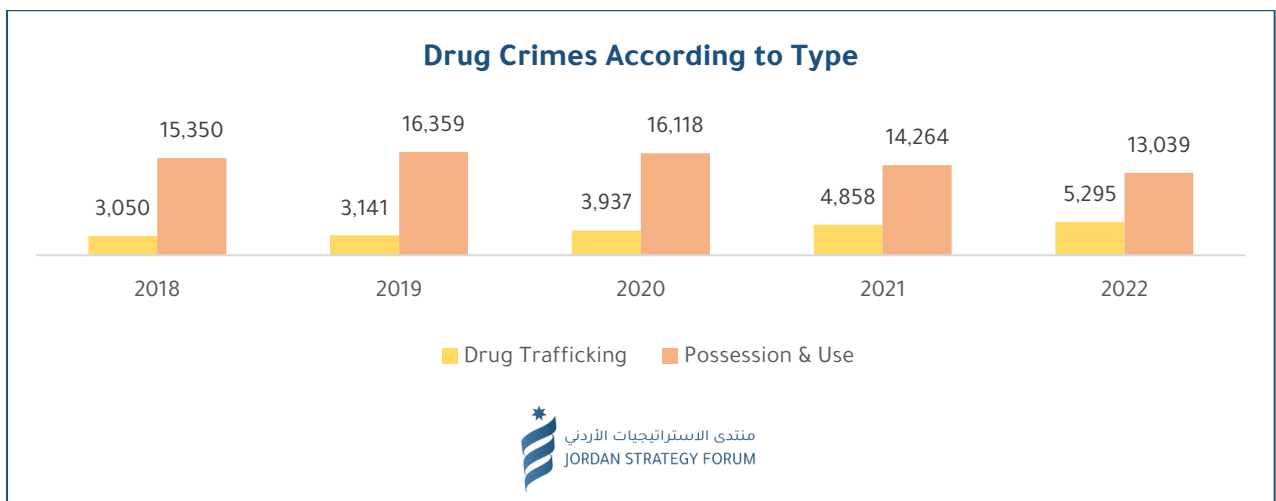
Source: Public Security Directorate, Criminal Statistical Report, 2022

3. Drug crimes per 10,000 inhabitants increased significantly from 9 crimes in 2013, to 16 crimes in 2014. While it reached its highest level in 2020, when it reached 19 crimes. It decreased again in 2022 to about 16 crimes only.



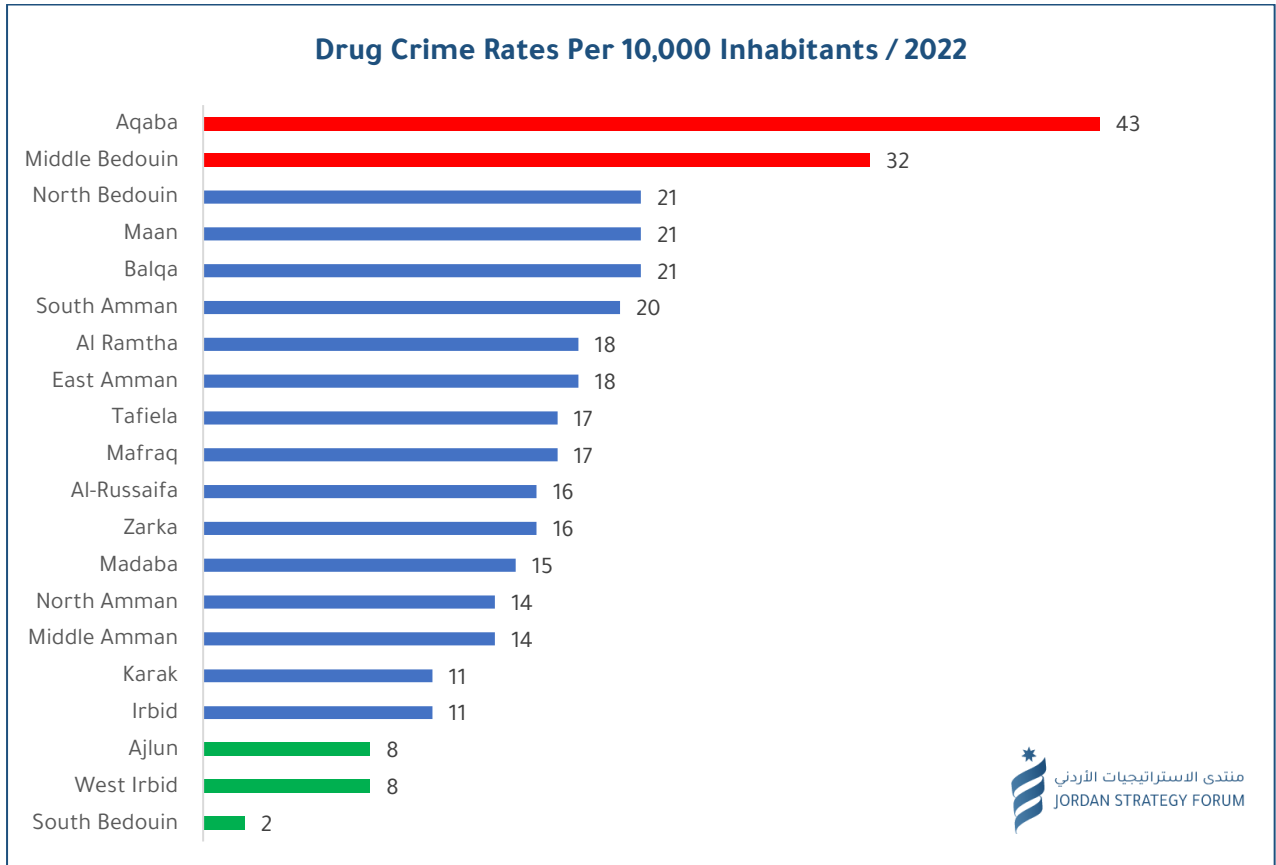
Source: Public Security Directorate, Criminal Statistical Report, 2022

4. The number of crimes related to drug possession and drug abuse is higher than drug trafficking. While possession and abuse crimes recorded a decline in their numbers during the past three years at a rate of -1.4%, -11.4% and -8.6%, respectively, we find that trafficking crimes recorded a continuous increase during the past five years.



Source: Public Security Directorate, Criminal Statistical Report, 2022

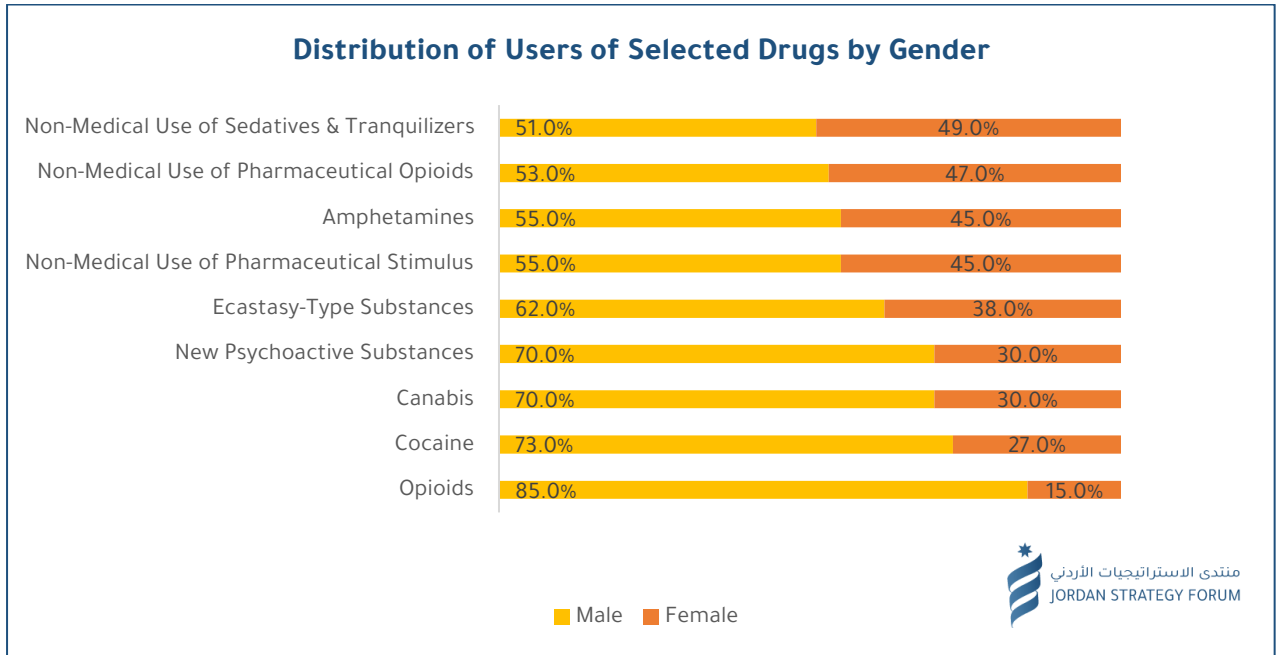
5. At the regional, city, and part of the city levels, the drug crime rate per 10,000 inhabitants reflects some large differences. For example, Aqaba registered the highest rate (43 drug crimes per 10,000 inhabitants) in the Kingdom. Whereas, the Southern Bedouin area, recorded the lowest rate (2 per 10,000 inhabitants) of drug crimes.



Source: Public Security Directorate, Criminal Statistical Report, 2022

In addition to the above-mentioned observations about drug crimes in Jordan, it is useful to note that on the 27th of June 2022, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime published its **“World Drug Report, 2022”**. From this Report, it is worth noting the following quotations.

1. “The market for cocaine is booming, with new record highs in manufacture and high levels of use”.
2. “Young people continue to use more drugs than adults and have higher levels of use than in past generations”.
3. “Illicit drug economies can flourish in situations of conflict and weak rule of law, and can, in turn, prolong or fuel conflict”.
4. “While the majority of people who use drugs are men, women use some drug types nearly as much as men”.



Source: Public Security Directorate, Criminal Statistical Report, 2022

Relative to the above-mentioned observations, it is worthwhile noting that at the Brookings Institution Panel Discussion on January 13, 2022, Jordan's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates stated that **"our border with Syria is 367 kilometers. In the past few years, the biggest threat from the situation there has been terrorist organizations. Now, hardly a week goes by without our army aborting one or two attempts to bring drugs into the country. In the past, we were seen as a transit market ... But now, with the emergence of (cheaper) chemical drugs, such as Captagon, we became a target, and this is a challenge we are facing"**.

Within the context of the above statement, one should appreciate the demonstrably important role of the Jordanian army in protecting the Syrian Jordanian border from the drug cartels, and the efforts of the Anti- Narcotics Department (Public Security Directorate). Indeed, some of its stated duties include the followings:

1. Arresting suspects and preventing illegal cultivation of drugs in addition to preparing reports and statistics about narcotics problem.
2. Raising awareness regarding the narcotics problem via awareness lectures at schools, universities, youth centers and TV programs.
3. Supervising the treatment of addicts based on Article 14 of the Law on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances No. 11 of 1988, and developing a proper mechanism of treatment in coordination with the Ministry of Health and by using the experiences of developed countries.

Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between cases of drug trafficking, drug possession and drug use, due to the fraud that occurs by the perpetrators of these crimes. Here, the Jordan Strategy Forum notes the need to deal with this issue with great care by the concerned authorities. In fact, the law differentiates, in terms of punishment, between trafficking and drug use.

TO SUM UP, the fact that “**addiction**” is a chronic, treatable brain disorder from which one can recover, the Anti-Narcotics Department and the Ministry of Health should be encouraged to undertake detailed scientific research on drug use and its consequences in Jordan. Naturally, the objective of this effort is to apply scientific research to drug use and addiction, and to use the produced information / analysis / knowledge in improving individual and public health in Jordan. It is also necessary to allocate special treatment centers for juvenile drug users, and to create follow-up health and behavioral care programs for addicts after their discharge. It is also essential to follow up with drug users during their sobriety because the most common reason for relapse and return to abuse is the difficulty of newly recovered persons dealing with addiction amongst their families and communities.



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