



UNITED NATIONS

## **ANNUAL REPORTS OF GOVERNMENTS**

UNDER THE CONVENTION OF 13 JULY 1931 FOR LIMITING  
THE MANUFACTURE AND REGULATING THE DISTRIBUTION  
OF NARCOTIC DRUGS, AS AMENDED BY THE PROTOCOL OF  
11 DECEMBER 1946

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# **HONG KONG**

**ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1952**

COMMUNICATED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF  
THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN  
AND NORTHERN IRELAND

### **NOTE BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

The Secretary-General has the honour to communicate herewith an annual report forwarded to him in pursuance of Article 21 of the Convention of 13 July 1931 for Limiting the Manufacture and Regulating the Distribution of Narcotic Drugs, as amended by the Protocol of 11 December 1946. (For the form of annual reports, see document E/NR.1949/Form)

*New York, 1953*

## A. GENERAL

### I. LAWS AND PUBLICATIONS

The Dangerous Drugs Ordinance No. 35 of 1935 (now known as the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, Chapter 134 of the Revised Edition 1950) was amended by an order made by the Governor in Council on 12 June 1952 to include in its schedule of Dangerous Drugs, those substances, not already included, which were brought under international control by virtue of Article I or Article II of the Protocol of 19 November 1948.

This Order was cited as the Dangerous Drugs (Amendment of Schedule) Order 1952.

### II. ADMINISTRATION

1. No changes were made during the year in the administrative arrangements, which are vested in the Medical Department under the Director of Medical and Health Services. No difficulties have been encountered during the year under review.
2. It is not possible to give an estimate of the number of addicts in the Colony. Addiction to opium smoking is still prevalent, particularly among the large refugee population. However, a considerable improvement was noticeable during the year, principally in the falling-off of the number of illicit opium divans. Success in this field was due, in the main, to police action against landlords and tenants who had allowed their premises to become involved.

There is no evidence to show that addiction to any form of drug is prevalent among the younger people of the Colony:

Statistics submitted by the Commissioner of Police show increased activity towards suppression of heroin and morphine smoking. The number of prosecutions brought against keepers of divans and smokers would appear to indicate an increase in the prevalence of this habit. However, the proportions are such as not to warrant, as yet, any grave concern.

### III. CONTROL OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE

The system in force has worked very smoothly, and there have been no irregularities.

### IV. INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

There is nothing to report under this heading.

### V. ILLICIT TRAFFIC

1. The illicit traffic is still predominantly concerned with opium. With the closing of the land frontier of Hong Kong and China, and a considerable reduction in junk traffic with the mainland, it might have been thought that a steep decline in seizures of raw opium would have resulted. On the contrary, more raw opium (844 kg) was confiscated in 1952 than in 1951 (567 kg).

The proportion of opium of Chinese origin now reaching the Colony is very much less than in previous years. There were seventy-two cases concerning raw opium during the year. The majority of these involved only small amounts of the drug, usually found during the routine searches of houses, huts, junks and sampans.

There have been no cases of diversion of drugs from legitimate channels.

Confiscation figures for morphine and heroin for the year appear to indicate a falling-off in addiction to these two drugs, although it is difficult to say to what extent confiscations reflect the over-all traffic in these drugs or the prevalence of addiction. Following are comparative figures:

	<u>1951</u>	<u>1952</u>
Morphine	19,052 kg.	12.6 kg
Heroin	8,943 kg	1.35 kg
Heroin Pills	36,315 pills	3471 pills

However the evidence of these figures, is, in the case of heroin, vitiated to a degree, by the seizure of fairly large quantities of heroin dross (residue of pills after smoking) during the year.

- The cultivation of the opium poppy, the coca plant and Indian hemp is prohibited in this Colony. Some varieties of hemp are, however, grown for rope making, but there has never been any evidence that this pursuit has ever been put to improper use. This Colony, with its small area, its intense cultivation and its absence of heavy forestation does not lend itself to clandestine cultivation of any illicit crop.
- There were 1918 police cases concerning dangerous drugs during the year. These can be broken down as follows:

Possession of raw opium	72
Possession of prepared opium, opium water, dross, keeping divans etc.	1471
Possession of heroin, heroin pills etc.	364
Possession of morphine	11

As a general rule, the individuals concerned in these cases are divisible into two occupational groups, one, a small group comprising the racketeers, and a much larger group, mostly unskilled workers and unemployed people, who for the greater part, represent the consumer. The racketeer group includes the divan keepers, and the carriers who bring the drugs into the Colony, who if caught usually describe themselves as itinerant merchants.

There have been no changes, within the year, in the scale of penalties prescribed for offences concerning narcotic drugs.

- The largest seizure of raw opium during the year was 488 kg, found on board the S.S. *E Sang* by marine police on 18 February 1952 during a routine search immediately after the vessel's arrival from Calcutta via Penang, Singapore, Bangkok and Saigon. This opium was very well packed in small tin-lined wooden boxes, and concealed under the iron flooring of the engine room of the vessel. No arrests were made, but it is a significant fact that two of the ships firemen, who were believed to be implicated, disappeared without trace. This opium was thought to have been Thai origin.

The second largest seizure of raw opium was 127 kg, found on board the M.V. *Eastern Queen* during a routine search immediately after her arrival from Calcutta on 16 August 1952. This opium was of Indian origin.

Another large seizure of 88 kg, was made on a B.O.A.C. plane coming direct from Bangkok during a search on arrival at the local airport. The opium was contained in four suitcases but was not claimed by any of the passengers. This opium was thought to have been of Thai origin.

No arrests were made in any of the above three cases.

A more colourful case was that of Mr. Term Toonganaga, co-pilot of a Thailand Airways Co. plane, who attempted to leave his plane at the local

airport on 26 February 1952, with 49½ ounces (1.4033 kg) of raw opium concealed (a) in his briefcase, (b) in the company's uniform he was wearing, (c) inside his torch, (d) cunningly concealed inside a talcum tin, and (e) in the pockets of a jacket in the small suit-case he was carrying. He was fined H.K. \$5,000.00 (US \$875) and sentenced to six months hard labour.

5. Following are the quantities of narcotic drugs seized in the Colony during the year 1952.

Raw opium	844 kg
Prepared opium	16 kg
Heroin	1.350 kg
Morphine, crude	10.6 kg
Morphine, relatively pure	2 kg

6. As in previous years the market price of illicit drugs fluctuated considerably with demand and availability. The effect of a seizure of a large amount of raw opium is to raise the price of prepared opium. Prices vary also according to quality. The average price per Kilo of "Calcutta" raw opium during 1952 approximated H.K. \$2,400.00 (US \$420). The average price of "Bangkok" raw opium (the bulk of which is considered to be of Chinese origin) was in the vicinity of H.K. \$1,600.00 (US \$280) per kilogramme. Prepared opium averaged H.K. \$2,700.00 (US \$472.50) per kilogramme. Crude morphine sold at H.K. \$300 (US \$52.50) and upwards per ounce (28.4 g). No estimate can be given for the price of crude heroin, but average quality heroin pills, the form in which the drug is smoked, sold for eleven or twelve H.K. dollars (US \$1.93-\$2.10) per hundred. The average heroin content of these pills is about one-quarter of a grain (0.02 g)

One large seizure on examination proved to be crude morphine heavily adulterated with caffeine.

#### VI. OTHER INFORMATION

No suggestions are offered.

#### B. RAW MATERIALS

#### VII. RAW OPIUM

The cultivation of the opium poppy is prohibited.

#### VIII. COCA LEAF

The cultivation of coca leaf is prohibited.

#### IX. INDIAN HEMP

The Indian hemp plant does not grow wild in the Colony. Two or three varieties of Cannabis Sativa (Linn) are cultivated for primitive rope-making. There has not been a single instance of cultivated hemp being put to illicit use.

#### C. MANUFACTURED DRUGS

#### X. INTERNAL CONTROL OF MANUFACTURED DRUGS

No narcotic drugs are manufactured in Hong Kong. The system of control over imported drugs for licit purposes has not changed. Registered Pharmacists in business as such, and companies that have on their staff a registered pharmacist, are the only individuals or concerns that are authorised to import, or have in their possession narcotic drugs for licit distribution.

*Manufacture of and Trade in Diacetylmorphine*

A very small stock of this drug is held for distribution, by the Government Medical Department, for the normal domestic needs of the Colony. There were no importations during the year.

**D. OTHER QUESTIONS**

**XI. CHAPTER IV OF THE HAGUE OPIUM CONVENTION OF 1912**

Nothing to report.

**XII. PREPARED OPIUM**

A. The policy of this Colony is that of total prohibition of opium smoking. Heavy penalties are prescribed for possession, keeping opium divans, etc., and to a lesser degree for smoking opium. Corrective action is directed, therefore, more towards the traffickers in prepared opium and the keepers of divans.

Treatment of former addicts is carried out at three of the larger Government hospitals where addicts may, if they wish, present themselves. Treatment is not compulsory.

B. Does not apply.

C. For details of illicit importation, seizures and prosecutions, see Chapter V above. All prepared opium is dumped at sea. During 1952, 701 Kilos of good quality raw opium were disposed of through the Crown Agents, London. Part of this quantity represented a balance carried over from 1951. Of the total weight actually seized (844 kg), 131 kg were destroyed by dumping at sea.

**XIII. MISCELLANEOUS**

No data of importance.

