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Vietnam and Cambodia: Anti-Drug Cooperation in the Border Areas

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Abstract

Collaborative activities on drug prevention between Vietnam and Cambodia have contributed to reducing drug crimes in the border areas of the two countries, in Southeast Asia and in the world. This article discusses the cooperation process between Vietnam and Cambodia in anti-drug on the border between 1998 and 2019. It describes the situation of drug crimes and characteristics of drug trafficking groups on the Vietnam-Cambodia border. It reviews results of cooperation between the two countries on this issue. The article discusses proposing some solutions to improve cooperation effectiveness in the coming time. The article concludes that cooperation between Vietnam and Cambodia against drug crimes will be strengthened but requires more efforts of the two countries' authorities.

Keywords: anti-drug, anti-drug on the borders, collaborative, drug trafficking groups, Vietnam-Cambodia border, Vietnam-Cambodia cooperation.

1. Introduction

Drug trafficking is one of the principal illicit activities worldwide and constitutes a serious threat to the entire international community. Cooperation, coordination and commitment by all countries are essential to curb this crime. Vietnam – Cambodia has a land border of about 1,137 kilometer from the first point at the junction of Vietnam – Laos – Cambodia border (Indochina junction) to the end point on the coast of Ha Tien, Kien Giang province of Vietnam, adjacent to Cambodia's Kampot province. Both are located in the Greater Mekong Subregion and near the Golden Triangle and also the point of departure, arrival and transfer of drug. In recent years, along the Vietnam – Cambodia border, especially the triangle of Vietnam – Laos – Cambodia has become an important area for criminals to form lines, organize trade, transport illegally drug substances into Vietnam for consumption or transshipment to third countries. Cooperation activities against drugs between Vietnam and Cambodia began in 1998 when the two countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding between Vietnam and Cambodia on cooperation in controlling drugs, psychotropic substances and pre-chemicals. More than 20 years, these activities have contributed to the prevention, detection and arrest of cross-border drug smuggling crimes, contributed to reducing drug crimes in each country, creating a good change in prevention, fighting crimes and contributing to protecting the security and order in the border areas. In addition to the achieved results, the cooperation between Vietnam and Cambodia in this area is still limited, difficult and challenges need to be addressed soon. The article uses the situational analysis based on declassified documents and key reports. The author wants to find the causes of the limitations in

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cooperation between the two countries, simultaneously, proposing some solutions to improve the effectiveness of this work in the future.

2. Discussion and results

The situation of drug trafficking on the Vietnam-Cambodia border areas

The Golden Triangle is the world's second-largest drug producing region, and the effects are being felt in Cambodia and Vietnam border. Traffic of illicit drugs has been developing complicatedly and showing rising trend in Vietnam and Cambodia recently. Both have become a destination and significant transit for trafficking of illicit drugs and their precursor chemicals to international markets. The drug market in Cambodia includes heroin, ketamine and mefomketamine. They are produced from the Golden Triangle area into Cambodia via Rattanakiri province along the border. Then, these products are packaged, branded, shipped to other countries. For example, in 2016, Cambodian authorities broke more than 4,000 drug transport cases, arrested 9,933 suspects and confiscated 179 kilogram of drugs (Yan, 2017). In 2018, Cambodia detected and arrested 4,399 cases with 8,389 subjects, including 98 Vietnamese, who were from Nigeria, Brazil and Colombia were also arrested in Cambodia (Chuong, 2018a).

Vietnam has become a destination and significant transit for trafficking of illicit drugs and their precursor chemicals to international markets. A large share of illicit drugs trafficked into and through Vietnam, over the past few years, has been smuggled by land and sea from neighboring countries, which partly being further trafficked to other countries. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Cambodia have been identified as a transit area for drugs from drug centers in the Golden Triangle, and the Golden Crescent in Asia and South America to Vietnam and to other countries (UNODC, 2019), and 80 percent of drugs brought into Vietnam are bound for another country (VNA, 2019), in which Cambodia accounts for over 10 percent. And that's why drug trafficking around Vietnam-Cambodia border have become more complicated as Vietnam has become a transit hub for traffickers. The situation of illegal trafficking and transportation of drugs through the Vietnam-Cambodia border area is most complicated in the three provinces of Tay Ninh, An Giang and Kien Giang (Vietnam) and five provinces of Kampong Cham, Svay Rieng and Prey Veng, Takéo, Kampot (Cambodia).



The Economist

Fig 1. Drug trafficking routes from the Golden Triangle
Sources: UNODC; The Economist (Dahaka, Kutkai, 2018)

Drug from the Golden Triangle area through Thailand, Laos and Cambodia to Vietnam. Domestic and foreign traffickers continue transporting drug from Cambodia through border areas to Binh Hiep and My Quy Tay in Long An Province, Moc Bai in Tay Ninh Province and Hoa Lu in Binh Phuoc Province to the Central and Southwest provinces or Mekong River Delta, and then gathered at warehouses in provinces bordering cities such as Binh Duong province, Dong Nai province and Long An province... After that, they were transported to secret warehouses in Ho Chi Minh City to find a way to disguise themselves into cargo containers, machines and then use illegal export border companies to third countries such as the Philippines, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Australia through ports, international airports in Ho Chi Minh city.

According to data from Vietnam's Ministry of Public Security, the number of drug trafficking cases at the end of 2018 and in the first months of 2019 in southern localities has reportedly risen, especially after northern and central localities stepped up a crackdown on drug traffickers. More and more drug traffickers have fled to the south and Cambodia to produce synthetic drugs, set up drug trafficking rings and transport drugs from Cambodia to Vietnam for local consumption or to ship elsewhere. In 2018, across the Vietnam – Cambodia border, the authorities arrested 1,537 cases (6.26 percent nationwide), 2,626 subjects (6.94 percent), seized 11.58 kilogram of heroin (0.73 percent), 5.2 kilogram of dry marijuana, 76.83 kg (4.38 percent) and 1,073 synthetic drugs (Ha, 2019). In the first half of 2019, drug prevention and control forces and border forces in Vietnam joined hands with Cambodian functional agencies to arrest and detect 32 cases and 60 subjects, seizing nearly 130 kilogram of drugs of all kinds (30 bricks of heroin, 55,461 meth pills and nearly 114 kilogram of synthetic drug), making up 6.64 percent of the total cases, 8.04 percent of criminals and 5.94 percent of the total drugs (Hai, 2019).

Characteristics of drug trafficking groups in the Vietnam-Cambodia border areas

Illicit activities: Vietnam and Cambodia are participating in UN conventions on drug control such as United Nations Convention on Narcotics in 1961; Convention on Psychotropic Substances in 1971; United Nations Convention against the Illicit Trade of Narcotic Drugs and Psychological Substances in 1988. Drugs and drug trafficking are both illegal activities in both countries. Legally, the death penalty was abolished in Cambodia, but the Law on the Control of Drugs bodes ill for those caught with controlled substances, at least on paper. Under Cambodian law, individuals involved in the illegal use of addictive substances will be sentenced to between 1-6 months and fined from 100,000 riel (25 USD) to 1 million riel. And continuing recidivism will result in a fine of between 6 months and 1 year and a fine of 1-2 million riel. For cases of illegal possession and trafficking of addictive substances, a fine of 2-5 years in prison and a fine of 4-10 million riel. For serious cases, offenders will be punished from 5-20 years in prison and fined 10-40 million riel. For example, in June 2017, a Malaysian man arrested with 1.08 kilogram of heroin at Phnom Penh International Airport was sentenced to life imprisonment (Kongkeo, 2017). In 2016, the Cambodian Court of Appeals upheld the life sentence of three French, Australian and Negeria subjects arrested with 2.2 kilogram of heroin in their luggage (Helen, 2018). Cambodia's laws prescribe punishment ranging from 5 years to life in prison, but law enforcement is lax (Michael, 2019), and drugs are readily available, thus, easy to access, including illegal substances (Oppenheimer, 2009). Vietnam strictly enforces its drug laws. In 2000, the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam passed the Law on Preventing and Combating Narcotic Drugs. This law asserts: "The drug problem poses a major threat to the entire society, doing harm to human health, causing offspring degeneration, degrading human dignity, disrupting family happiness, and gravely affecting social order and safety and national security" (National Assembly of Vietnam, 2000). As prescribed by Article 96a and Article 203 of the Vietnamese Criminal Code in 1999, possession of heroin in quantities larger than 1.3 pounds gets you a mandatory death sentence. In 2007, 85 people were executed for drug-related offenses.

According to a study in Vietnam, the period of 2001-2010, the total number of defendants who were illegally storing, transporting, trading, or appropriating narcotics were sentenced to death by 569 defendants (accounting for 40.04 percent of capital punishment in Vietnam during 2001–2010, second only to murder offenses) (Toan, 2012). The Vietnamese Criminal Code in 1999 has 13 Articles (from Article 247 to Article 259) providing for crimes drug-related crimes, in which the death penalty framework is applied to the illegal trafficking of narcotic substances (Article 250) and the illegal trading of narcotic substances (Article 251).

Cross-border activity: The Vietnam-Cambodia border-based drug crime carries out a close bond at home and abroad to form cross-border criminal lines and organizations. In the Vietnam-Cambodia border, transnational drug-crime groups, mainly led by Taiwanese, collocated Vietnamese and Cambodian to organize drug transportation in very large numbers. Many people who are wanted by Vietnamese drug criminals flee to Cambodia to connect with Cambodian and Lao people to form drug gathering places right near the border and hook up the establishment of drug transport lines into Vietnam. In order to bring narcotics from outside the border into inland Vietnam, offenders often form a closed line organization from exploiting sources of goods to transport and consume drugs. Cambodian subjects colluded with Vietnamese people to the remote forests of Vietnam or Cambodia in the bordering area to set up tents and shacks to illegally store and trade narcotics. In addition, these criminals often associate with overseas Vietnamese or do business and business in Cambodia, the subjects are tourism, career, freelance labor... often back and forth between the two sides. In addition to illegal trade, heroin, synthetic drugs, marijuana from Cambodia to Vietnam are consumed in the southern provinces, even transported to the North for consumption (Nguyen, 2019).

Violence and armed: Drug organizations operate with great audacity and disregard for life and law. Normally, after trafficking in drugs, criminals often immediately transport the purchased drugs to Vietnam. Subjects can be transported by road across the border into Vietnam, mainly walking by trails and shortcuts in the forest. They rely on the long-standing kinship relationship between people living on both sides of the border, especially the Khmer, Gia Rai, Ede, Stieng ... to operate, such as hiring transporters with high wages. Or hire Cambodians who have close relations on the border of Vietnam, have the opportunity to visit, do business, trade and transport drugs. These people come to Vietnam easily to find shelter, even sheltered places of relatives, relatives in Vietnam.

In addition, the instigators and leaders have manipulated and used the object of women and children of ethnic minorities to transport drugs for them from Cambodia to Vietnam. This is a popular form of transportation and very suitable for the terrain of Vietnam – Cambodia border provinces. And subjects can transport drugs across the border into Vietnam by means of cars or motorbikes that directly enter and exit through national border gates; some subjects also use tourist cars and official-duty vehicle number plates. Cambodia to transport drugs into inland Vietnam. Besides, drug users often use a large number of people involved in drug transportation, including the assignment of goods-carrying subjects, border-guard subjects and subjects carrying protective weapons. When detected and arrested, they fight back fiercely and run into the forest so it is very difficult to catch them. A recent high-profile example of this violence is the on September 11, 2019, Cambodian and Vietnamese authorities successfully broke the drug line from Cambodia for consumption in Ho Chi Minh City, arrested 7 subjects, seized 35 kilogram of drugs, 2 gun and 21 bullets.

More recently, with sophisticated nature, methods, tricks, recklessness and aggression, drug offenders are equipped with many modern means of communication, drug transportation by many different and available means ready to use many firearm to fight back when detected or arrested.

These existing mechanisms to combat drug trafficking

Bilateral

Cooperation in the propagation and dissemination of the law on prevention and combat of drug-related crimes: The documents on cooperation agreements between Vietnam and Cambodia in this field contain provisions on law dissemination and exchange of documents legal documents related to the prevention and fight against drug-related crimes on the border line between the two sides. From 1998, the propaganda and dissemination of drug prevention and control legislation has been concerned by the Governments of the two countries with rich and diversified content and forms. Thereby, helping the functional forces of the two sides be fully aware of the nature, requirements and tasks of international cooperation in the fight against drug-related crimes between Vietnam and Cambodia. However, the law propaganda and dissemination still has many shortcomings, so the signed documents only exist in the form. In reality, there are still some documents signed but not disseminated, propagated and not instructed for implementation, so the functional forces and officials did not understand the content of the documents, so it was very

embarrassing circumstance request for international cooperation in the fight against drug-related crimes (Thanh, 2011).

Cooperating in negotiating, signing and organizing the implementation of multilateral and bilateral international treaties: Negotiating, signing and organizing the implementation of international treaties related to the prevention and fight against drug crimes between Vietnam and Cambodia is an important form of international cooperation. Up to now, the State and ministries, functional branches and localities of the two countries have negotiated and signed many bilateral cooperation documents on crime prevention and fight including drug offenses (treaties, Memorandum of understanding - MOU, agreement)*. However, the practice of organizing the implementation of these treaties is still inadequate, especially the transformation of the contents of international treaties into internal laws has been carried out very slowly; the assignment and specific responsibilities assigned to each agency and force in coordination have not been specified; the review of experience has been rarely implemented, so there is still a situation of signing cooperation documents but not paying attention to the implementation organization...

Cooperation in the provision and exchange of information on drug crimes: Cooperation between Vietnam and Cambodia in exchanging information on drug crime prevention and combat through INTERPOL and ASEANPOL channels, exchange of experience, and organize briefings... Through INTERPOL and ASEANPOL cooperation channels, the two countries mainly focused on sharing of experiences in crime prevention and fighting in general, cooperating in investigations on background checks, criminal records, criminal records and Cambodian subjects crimes in Vietnam or vice versa, with the greatest focus on clarifying drug offenders and catching fleeing criminals across the border between the two countries. Through the Standing Office for Drug and Crime Prevention, the Police Department investigates drug offenses and the Police Force investigates drug offenses Police of provinces that share the border with Cambodia, exchange information, especially information serving the discovery of drug-related crimes on the borderline, cooperating in wanted and sought activities, extradition of drug-related crimes. The functional forces of the two countries have proactively built a cooperation mechanism, exchanged their experience of struggle, as well as information on the methods and tricks of drug-related criminal activities in each country, types of newly discovered drug offenses, experience in detecting and preventing... And drug prevention and fight agencies of the two countries have conducted regular meetings and briefings, especially the police of provinces and districts on both sides of the border fairly regularly (Hiep, 2012). The content of exchange is about information related to drug-related activities; coordinate in the investigation and verification of information gathering, case documents and subjects. In the past time, on the border of the two countries, 5 pairs of Border Liaison Office (BLO) have been established in Tay Ninh and An Giang provinces (Phong, 2017). The BLOs have done a good job as a contact point, exchanging information on drug prevention and fight between Vietnam and Cambodia, as a direct receiving point and collecting and assessing the crime drug situation offenses in border areas, timely advising leaders of the two countries in directing functional forces to carry out coordinated activities to raise the effectiveness of drug crime prevention and combat (Khanh, Binh, 2018).

However, the process of coordinating the exchange of information on drug crimes and coordination in solving some cases is still slow and ineffective. The mechanism of cooperation is still rigid according to administrative procedures, especially in coordinating solving urgent and important cases, so it has not met the requirements in the coordination of crime prevention and fighting, has not yet promoted to the fullest possible conditions of the two parties. And the coordination of information exchange and drug prevention and fighting experiences among border

* Agreement on cooperation in drug prevention and fight in Mekong sub-region in 1993; Agreement on Vietnam-Laos-Cambodia drug cooperation in 1998; Agreement on extradition between Vietnam and Cambodia in 2013; Program of coordination between the Department of Drug and Crime Prevention (Vietnam Border Guard Command), Department of Drug Investigation Police (Vietnam Ministry of Public Security) and Department of Drug Prevention (Ministry of the Interior of Cambodia) on September 26, 2018; Agreement between Vietnam and Cambodia on the implementation of projects using Vietnam's non-refundable aid capital to implement investment projects on the construction of a number of items of the Project on Center for voluntary detoxification community-based in Preah Sihanouk province, Cambodia on December 7, 2018.

provinces has not been conducted regularly. The regular and irregular conferences and briefings between the two countries' forces have places and levels are not deep, the content is not specific and formal, so the effectiveness is still low.

Cooperate in patrolling, ensuring security, border safety and preventing criminal activities: This has been maintained by the two sides in strict compliance with the Treaties and Treaties of the Governments of the two countries. Accordingly, the Border Guard and the Police of the border provinces organize regular and irregular border patrol and control sessions. Thereby, contributing to maintaining and building relationships between border localities in order to enhance the confidence, understanding and solidarity of people on the two border sides, creating favorable conditions for management tasks, protecting sovereignty, border security, in effectively combating crime prevention, maintaining the border of peace, friendship, comprehensive cooperation and sustainable development. According to statistics at the Conference on coordination of border management and protection between the High Command of the Border Guard, the Ministry of Defense of Vietnam and the General Department of National Police, Ministry of the Interior of Cambodia, in the period of 2013–2018, Vietnam Border Guard stations and Cambodian Border Guard Police stations held 432 patrols with 4,124 soldiers. Coordinate propaganda 363 times for 2,558 people, and organize cultural exchange, arts, sports and sports was 289 sessions with 2,668 soldiers (Ministry of Defense of Vietnam, 2018). A case in point is that the An Giang Border Guard Command has cooperated with the Cambodian authorities of Ta Kéo and Kandal in combating crime prevention, maintaining main security stability border areas. All relevant cases that have been resolved are promptly handled in accordance with the treaty, treaty and border regulations. From 2009 to 2019, the border protection forces held 180 regular meetings and border posts coordinated to organize 770 bilateral border patrols with 6,930 soldiers from both countries (Bay, 2019).

Cooperating in the implementation of measures to prevent, investigate and arrest criminals: In order to effectively fight against this type of crime, three units of two countries (the Police Department investigating drug-related crimes (the Ministry of Public Security); the Department for Prevention and Control of Drugs and Crime, the Ministry's High Command The Border Guard (Ministry of National Defense) and the General Department of National Police, Ministry of the Interior of Cambodia have made great efforts, gathered forces and vehicles, and implemented programs and plans to fight the crime. This is the case in every country as well as participating in the forums and activities of countries around the world and in Southeast Asia. In particular, the provincial and district forces in the opposing areas have focused on coordinating to detect, arrest and prevent the remote source of illicit drug into the inland.

Table 1. Vietnam-Cambodia in the arrest of drug offenders (2015–2019)

Time	Cases	Objects	Amount of drug seized
2015	405	567	2,932 kilogram of heroin, 6,304 tablets and 31,627 kilogram of synthetic drugs, 1.25 kilogram of synthetic drug in stone form, 60,422 grams of methamphetamine, 1.2 kilogram of dry marijuana, 0.5 kilogram of cannabis seeds and many exhibits... (Ministry of Public Security of Vietnam, 2015).
2016	602	890	19.2 kilogram of heroin, 13.5 kilogram of opium, 4.6 kilogram of dry marijuana, 56.2 kilogram and 896 synthetic drugs.
2017	1.223	1.986	9.67 kilogram of heroin, 8.9 kilogram and 979 synthetic drugs, 11.6 kilogram of opium, 3.4 kilogram of dry marijuana, and many related exhibits.
2018	1.537	2.626	11.58 kilogram of heroin, 5.2 kilogram of dry marijuana, 76.83 kilogram and 1,073 synthetic drugs (Ha, 2019).
half of 2019	32	60	129,892 kilogram of drugs including 30 heroin crackers, 55,461 tablets, and 113.94 kilogram of synthetic drugs... (Anh, 2019).

According to the [Table 1](#), from 2015 to 2018, on the Vietnam-Cambodia border, functional units of the two countries cooperated to destroy 3,767 cases, arrest 6,069 subjects, seize nearly 1 ton of drugs of all kinds. This is illustrated in 2018, across the Vietnam - Cambodia border, Vietnamese authorities arrested 1,537 cases, 2,626 subjects, seized 11.58 kilogram of heroin, 5.2 kilogram of dry marijuana, 76, 83 kilogram and 1,073 synthetic drug pills. At the briefing meeting between the three forces of Vietnam and Cambodia (The Department of Drug Prevention and Combat against the Border Guard is under the Ministry of National Defense of Vietnam, the Police Department investigates drug offenses under the Ministry of Public Security of Vietnam and the Department of Drug Prevention and Prevention, the General Department of National Police under the Ministry of the Interior of Cambodia.) in coordinating the fight against drug offenses held in Da Nang on September 26, 2018, it was pointed out: In 2018, the border guards and the Vietnam-Cambodia border police units held regular and irregular meetings 273 times, exchanged 126 valuable news, coordinated to arrest more than 188 kilogram of drugs types ([Ministry of Public Security of Vietnam, 2018a](#)). Colonel Nguyen Dich Nam, Deputy Director of the Police Department investigating drug offenses, Vietnam Ministry of Public Security said:

"In just the first 9 months of 2018, the number of heroin seized was more than 1 ton and the number of exhibits was larger than that of 2017 combined. The activities of drug offenses are considered by the parties to be increasingly large and dangerous" ([Chuong, 2018b](#)).

Some typical cases are: Investigation into a robbery 414C of the Border Guard of Tay Ninh province in 2014. Through exchanging and coordinating to verify information between the Prevention and Control of Drugs and Crimes, the Provincial Border Guards and the Police Department Ba Vet, Svay Rieng province on the illegal trading and transporting network of narcotics through the Moc Bai international border-gate area, the Tay Ninh Border Guard has established investigation into a robbery 414C. It fought to break a line of illegal drug trafficking and transportation across the border, arresting 03 subjects, collecting 9.8 kilogram of heroin and 12 kilogram of additives ([Anh, Anh, 2016](#)). On March 28, 2018, Tay Ninh Police coordinated with Cambodian functional units to successfully break the largest ever illegal cross-border drug trafficking project with the total seized material evidence of more than 11 kilogram of assorted drugs, more than 5 billion and many other objects and related documents ([Nhung, 2018](#)).

In the first 6 months of 2019, although the number of drug trafficking cases and subjects were seized and handled by the Vietnamese drug prevention and control forces and border guards, in coordination with the Cambodian authorities only 32 cases, 60 subjects but collected 129,892 kilogram of drugs including 30 heroin crackers, 55,461 tablets, 113.94 kilogram of synthetic drugs, accounting for 6.64 percent of the cases, 8.04 percent of the subjects, accounting for 5.94 percent of all seized drugs on Vietnam's entire border ([Anh, 2019](#)).

In addition to the achieved results, the work of grasping the situation of drug-related crimes on the Vietnam-Cambodia border is still lacking in comprehensiveness, not being proactive, thus exchanging information and situation of drug-related crimes not often, timely, mainly social relations and handling specific cases. The timely sharing of information and coordination has led to the fact that the crimes continue to become a major threat, directly affecting the security of the Vietnam-Cambodia border ([Khanh, 2018](#)). Drug control forces at the Vietnam-Cambodia border have not been deployed synchronously, lacking equipment to check and detect drugs. Activities of coordinating verification and arrest of drug offenders are still limited, especially in the coordination of investigating specific cases, thus limiting the effectiveness of the fight, leaving the crime or slow to detect, arrest and handle, especially transnational organized drug offenders.

Cooperating in the training and retraining of a contingent of officials engaged in crime prevention and fighting: Through the signed agreements, protocols, agreements, cooperation activities in training and fostering the contingent of crime prevention between Cambodia and Vietnam. Both participated in cooperating to conduct training and exchange programs on criminal investigation, personnel, and to inform each other about the annual training schedule as well as plans, visits, surveys and awards exchange managers, training... According to data from the International Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Public Security of Vietnam, every year Vietnam trains Cambodia with 100 cadres at the Public Security schools but most of them are in management and leadership, very few cases follow. study related subjects to prevent and combat drug-related crime. On the Cambodian side, Cambodia receives 20 annual training courses for Vietnamese police, mainly about Khmer language and culture ([Ministry of Public Security of](#)

Vietnam, 2018, b). In general, training cooperation activities between Vietnam and Cambodia are not commensurate with the potential and needs of both sides; the number of training is not high, not professionally trained in the fight against drug-related crimes. The majority of the training classes are organized by Vietnam, while the Cambodian side is very few.

Multilateral

Vietnam and Cambodia have actively participated in related anti-drug forums and conferences such as ASEAN conferences, tripartite cooperation mechanism on drug prevention between Vietnam - Cambodia - Laos. Through these forums, countries have been shared latest information, discuss emerging trends and potential risks to countries inside and outside the region, and analyzing and assessing the situation of drug trafficking and production, identify new drug trafficking routes, drug trading and production hubs as well as ringleaders of illegal drug trafficking and production networks in the region. Vietnam and Cambodia are also involved in the development of effective plans, initiatives and implementation of existing cooperation mechanisms; help and support capacity building of law enforcement on drug prevention and fight; recommending regional countries to consider investing in building and deploying a system of public drug control stations at locations adjacent to the Golden Triangle area, in order to coordinate the control of drugs and precursors, towards the goal of encircling, isolating drug production area at Golden Triangle.

Regarding the tripartite cooperation mechanism on drug prevention between the three countries Vietnam – Cambodia – Laos. This mechanism has been established since 1998. After more than 20 years of operation, this mechanism has been increasingly effective, resulting in a significant contribution to maintaining, strengthening and strengthening relations friendly cooperation between the three countries in drug prevention. The tripartite ministerial meeting between Vietnam – Cambodia – Laos on cooperation in drug prevention and control was held annually to create favorable conditions for the parties to exchange information, experience and unify the coordination mechanism.

Cooperation through ASEAN: ASEAN is a dynamic development area, but always faces many threats and challenges of transnational crime, especially terrorism and drug crimes. Since its inception, ASEAN has strengthened and expanded cooperation to fight and prevent transnational crimes and Vietnam is an active country in that regard. ASEANAPOL was established in 1979 with the purpose of connecting the Police forces of countries in the region, creating a synergy against transnational crimes. Since its establishment, ASEANAPOL has made remarkable progress with a total of 10 member countries, 10 dialogue partners and 6 observers. The purpose of ASEANAPOL is to cooperate in combating against emerging crimes in the region such as pirates, drug smuggling, economic and financial fraud... Since the ASEAN-China Joint Declaration on cooperation in non-traditional security areas, ASEAN countries have implemented with dialogue countries, especially with China, Japan, Korea, and the US, EU, and international organizations in cooperation to fight transnational crimes, including drug crimes such as: "ASEAN Anti-Drug Cooperation Strategy 2000"; "Beijing Joint Declaration on Cooperation anti-drug cooperation in 2001"...

ASEAN countries have implemented the Conference Mechanism of Ministers and senior officials of ASEAN countries on drug issues, the ASEAN Drug Crime Information Center, the ASEAN Working Group on prevention and control drug by air and by sea, ASEAN Plan on Drug Control in the Golden Triangle area. At the same time, promoting bilateral cooperation with ASEAN countries and partners in drug prevention... For example, the ministerial meeting on enhancing the effectiveness of cooperation in fighting transnational drug crime was held in Hanoi the same day at the initiative of the Vietnamese Ministry of Public Security in 2019. It attracted nearly 200 delegates from Cambodia, Laos, China, Thailand, Myanmar, the Philippines, Vietnam, the US' Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Australian Federal Police (AFP), and the Regional Office of Southeast Asia and the Pacific of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Solutions to improve the effectiveness of cooperation

Due to the super profits from drug trafficking, in the near future, the activities of international drug crimes will increase in complexity. Drug trafficking gangs will promote drug trafficking on a large scale, not only operating in the region and continents as before but also expanding the trade route, transportation, invasion add more countries to operate. In particular, they continue to take advantage of economic globalization, open-door policies to attract investment from developing countries to penetrate, conduct activities of drug production, trade and money

laundering from smuggling. drug. Southeast Asia is and will not contain new complexities about drug crimes. The Golden Triangle is still the center of drug production in the world and the region, the production and trade of drugs here does not decrease but also spread to other countries in the region. In addition, criminal organizations in this field operate across countries, which are tightly organized, equipped with modernity, aggression and recklessness (Hung, Duong, 2012). Therefore, countries need to focus on international cooperation on information sharing, struggle experience and coordination of investigations.

In the coming years, the situation of drugs on the Vietnam-Cambodia border will have new complicated developments. Taking advantage of the open door policy and international integration, as well as the terrain of the provinces on the Vietnam-Cambodia border, rugged and difficult to control, drug-related crimes at this border line are constantly expanding and the scope of activities, especially associated with crimes on the Vietnam-Laos border, makes the situation of drug crimes between the two countries more complicated. Drug users will continue to attract people, especially ethnic minorities in areas bordering Vietnam - Cambodia, to engage in drug trafficking and transportation activities. In addition, they will use the global information network to illegally trade and trade narcotics. The above situation requires Vietnamese and Cambodian authorities to further improve the effectiveness of their cooperation in the prevention and combat of drug-related crimes, thus contributing to building a border line of peace, friendship and stability. planning and development. In particular, focus on some solutions as follows:

Firstly, the two countries need to organize the effective implementation of legal documents on cooperation in the prevention and combat of drug crimes. Both need to conduct a preliminary review of the signed documents, and promote the dissemination and propagation of the signed documents (published in newspapers, via radio and television newspapers, etc.) in order to raise the awareness of the people and officials involved in relevant work cooperation between Vietnam and Cambodia in the prevention and fight against drug-related crimes. The two countries assigned and decentralized in detail the implementation of signed documents between Vietnam and Cambodia, and strengthen the inspection and guidance of units and localities to implement international treaties on drug crime prevention and fight. In addition, the authorities of the two countries should continue to develop agreements, agreements and memorandums of cooperation in the fight against crimes, including drug-related crimes.

Secondly, strengthening coordination in exchanging information on drug prevention and fight between Vietnam and Cambodia. The authorities of the two countries need to maintain and strengthen meetings to discuss the issue of drug prevention and control cooperation. The two countries need to exchange through monthly, quarterly and annual briefings and set up a hotline for information exchange between the two competent authorities. At the provincial and border areas, it is necessary to maintain regular meetings to assess the results of drug prevention and combat coordination of each party, and at the same time exchange information, notify the situation, draw experience and discuss the Measures to improve the effectiveness of coordinated struggle. The two countries need to continue maintaining and promoting the operation of BLO, and further researching the functions and tasks of the BLO to suit the requirements of drug crime prevention and control activities right at the border.

Thirdly, coordinate closely in patrolling and protecting the common border, perform basic professional tasks, investigate and handle drug-related offenders related to Vietnam and Cambodia. Border protection forces of the two sides coordinate in well implementing the border patrol and protection regime. The two sides work together to control activities across the border in accordance with the law of each country. For the management of immigration, security of border gates, it is necessary to coordinate smoothly and facilitate the cross-border circulation, when there is an unexpected situation, the two sides actively exchange information and coordinate solve quickly together. When drug cases occur, they need to coordinate actively to check and handle crimes, and conduct the extradition of crimes in accordance with the agreements the two sides have signed.

In addition, the two sides need to strengthen the cooperation between the Police, Customs and Border Guards on the Vietnam-Cambodia border in the prevention and combat of drug crimes in the border areas and border gates; regularly conduct preliminary and summary meetings and set out directions for cooperation in drug-related crime prevention in the coming time. The Government and

Vietnamese functional forces should strengthen to assist Cambodia in training, staff training, providing financial support, means of detecting and investigating drug crimes.

3. Conclusion

In the past year, cooperation activities on drug prevention between Vietnam and Cambodia have contributed to preventing, detecting and arresting drug smuggling across the border, contributing to reducing drug crimes in each country, creating a positive change in the prevention and fight against criminals and contributing to protecting the security and order in the border areas. In the coming time, the Governments of the two countries need to direct the functional agencies in the country and the provinces sharing the border to further promote the coordination of drug prevention, especially to enhance information exchange and coordination closely coordinate in investigating, discovering and destroying drug trafficking and transportation lines on the border of the two countries. The two sides should continue to share information and experiences in the field of drug prevention, support each other in training to improve the capacity of staff working on drug prevention; coordinate in multilateral cooperation forums and drug prevention. Thereby, contributing to timely prevention and effective handling of various types of drug-related crimes in Vietnam – Cambodia are increasing, contributing to building a border of peace, friendship, development cooperation between Vietnam and Cambodia.

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