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## The phenomenon of drugs in Iraq and its international and national impacts

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### Abstract

Drug addiction is considered a criminal behavior, which led the Iraqi legislator to prohibit and criminalize it, imposing penalties on those who use or even approach it. This aims to limit its presence in Iraq and reduce unethical behaviors, leveraging the divine prohibition to curb it. The legislator also encourages media organizations to raise awareness about the dangers of this substance, which has contributed to reducing the phenomenon of drugs in Iraq.

**Keywords:** Drug addiction criminalization, Iraqi drug legislation, drug penalties

### Introduction

Drugs are among the biggest problems plaguing most global societies, whether agricultural or industrial. They spread like wildfire, particularly in Arab countries like Iraq, and have severe effects on individuals' physical and psychological systems, making them dependent on them. The dire impact extends to society, affecting social, economic, health, and security aspects, as addiction leads to increased crime, terrorism, and suicide rates. Drugs have a direct impact on human communities. The developments the world has witnessed were not inclusive of all individuals, leading some to feel alienated and depressed, driving them to drug use. Habitual use leads to addiction, making drugs a dangerous scourge in societies, spreading widely and necessitating doubled efforts to combat their spread and revive methods to mitigate this societal plague.

Drugs continue to spread, and their danger escalates, leading individuals to negative behaviors impacting all aspects of society, including moral, social, and even economic dimensions, as they weaken individuals physically and psychologically, leading to unemployment. This calls for continuous and diligent efforts from societies to combat this phenomenon. Studying the limitation of drug spread is particularly important in Iraq, which has witnessed a severe increase in drug proliferation, especially after the American occupation, leading to a security vacuum, loss of police control, and lack of border and customs regulation. This has resulted in a significant and alarming spread of this plague, which cannot be ignored by human conscience or public opinion. Thus, intensifying efforts to combat the drug menace and eliminating all promoters through imposing penalties has driven the Iraqi legislator to enact laws aimed at reducing this scourge in Iraqi society. Additionally, there are many terms related to drugs that cause confusion, so it is important to distinguish between them.

The research is divided into two chapters. The first chapter addresses the definition of drugs in its first section, and the second section clarifies the difference between drugs and related terms. The second chapter, in its first section, discusses the reasons for the spread of drugs in Iraq, while the second section explains the spread and decline of drug use.

This leads us to question: What are drugs? What are their types? What is the difference between drugs and related terms? What are the methods to combat their spread?

### Chapter One: The Concept of Drugs

Any study of social phenomena requires defining them because it helps in understanding the study and identifying the extent of the phenomenon's spread. There are other phenomena affecting societies besides drugs, which share some characteristics with drugs, necessitating a distinction between them and drugs.

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### Section One: Definition of Drugs

Defining the substance of drugs helps us avoid them and other substances on one hand, and on the other hand, to distinguish them from other substances that numb the human body. There is no comprehensive definition of this substance, as the law has defined it differently from jurisprudence and medicine.

#### First: Definition of Drugs in Language

The term "drug" (in Arabic: المخدر) comes from the word (خدر), which means "to cover" or "to veil." For example, when a woman is described as "تخدرت" (takhaddarat), it means she has veiled herself. Similarly, "خدر الأسد" (khaddara al-asad) means the lion stayed in its den, and "خدرت جسمه وعظامه" (khaddarat jismuhu wa'idhmuhu) means his body, bones, and limbs became numb. The term "drugs" thus refers to substances that cause numbness, tranquility, and lethargy, acting as a sensory inhibitor and altering awareness and perception. It implies a state of inactivity and drowsiness affecting the body and organs, often caused by consuming certain beverages or medications.

#### Second: Definition of Drugs in Terminology

In technical terms, drugs are chemical substances that induce drowsiness, sleep, or loss of consciousness accompanied by pain relief. The origin of the word traces back to the Greek term "nartosis," meaning to numb or to make numb. Drugs possess distinctive properties, either stimulating or sedative, but they have detrimental effects on individuals socially, psychologically, and physically.

The Iraqi law of 1965, in Article 68, specifically paragraph eight of Article 1, defines drugs as "any natural or synthetic substance listed in the first and second schedules attached to this law," with these schedules being periodically updated. It further describes drugs as substances or preparations containing stimulating (activating) or sedative (sleep-inducing) properties that, if used for non-medical purposes, can lead to habituation or addiction, thereby harming individuals and society physically, psychologically, socially, and economically. These substances impair full sensory awareness of one's surroundings, causing drowsiness or sleep. Awad Mohammed defines drugs as "any substance that produces a specific effect on the human body with certain symptoms identified by medicine, whether taken through the nose, injection, or other methods." Socially and medically, they are substances consumed by individuals in various ways (eating, drinking, smoking, inhaling, etc.), causing varying degrees of numbness depending on the situation, the type of drug, and its quantity. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines a drug as "any raw material, preparation, or synthetic substance containing sedative, tranquilizing, or stimulating elements that, if used for non-medical purposes, leads to habituation and addiction, causing psychological or physical harm to the individual and society."

### Section Two: Terms Similar to Drugs

Our study of drugs necessitates understanding substances that share many similarities with drugs but also differ from them, such as alcoholic beverages and tobacco, both of which have significant effects on the central nervous system of the brain and the human body in general.

#### First: Alcohol

From a linguistic standpoint, there is no specific word for alcohol; it is derived from the Arabic word (ghawl), as mentioned in the Quran: (Surah As-Saffat: 47). Alcohol is

defined as a state of mental stupor, accompanied by bodily movement, and is described as a state where a person is unable to perform their routine tasks. It is also used for medicinal purposes, such as sterilization.

People generally consume intoxicating substances and specifically alcohol to relax and escape the worries and troubles of life, even if only briefly. Alcohol is one of humanity's oldest discoveries, believed to have been discovered by chance when someone noticed that surplus ripe fruits, when left in a warm environment, emitted a pleasant aroma and were refreshing when consumed. Thus, alcohol was discovered. In the Chinese empire, an emperor was once offered a glass of alcohol, but he refused it, predicting that it would lead to the downfall of its consumer, and subsequently banned its consumption among his people.

Alcohol is produced through fermentation and comes in various forms, such as beer made from ripe fruits, spirits prepared through chemical processes, and barrel-aged varieties like whiskey. All these types of alcohol have a significant impact on the nervous system and brain, making them intoxicants rather than stimulants, and causing the consumer to lose balance.

#### Second: Tobacco

Smoking was not known until 1492 when Christopher Columbus brought tobacco leaves from the islands, introducing tobacco smoking to Europe, from where it spread worldwide, becoming a significant health, social, and economic problem. Tobacco is consumed through pipes or cigars, which is the method commonly known today. People smoke for various reasons, such as the desire for social interaction, alleviating worries, achieving calmness, and out of imitation, especially among the youth.

Tobacco contains a significant active ingredient called nicotine, a vegetable oil belonging to the alkaloids group of plant toxins. Nicotine is a narcotic that affects the lymph glands and the connection centers between nerves and muscles, causing irritation and rapidly diminishing their function. This reduces blood circulation, resulting in negative health impacts and classifying it as a narcotic substance.

We observe that alcohol and tobacco resemble and share characteristics with drugs due to their effects on the nervous system and their similar results, which include inducing a state of numbness. However, they differ in that drugs tend to depress the central nervous system, while some substances may stimulate these centers. Additionally, drugs generally have more severe effects on the human body compared to alcohol and tobacco.

There are many different types of drugs, which can be categorized into three main groups: raw or natural drugs (such as opium, cannabis, coca bush, and khat), prepared or manufactured drugs, and synthetic drugs.

#### First Group: Raw (Natural) Drugs

1. **Opium:** Extracted from the poppy plant, opium is also known as "the sleep-bringer" because it induces sleep in its users. It comes in the form of pills, powder, or liquid and can be consumed by swallowing, eating, or smoking. The Sumerians referred to it as "poppy," and it is also known as the "plant of happiness" or "plants of joy."
2. **Hashish:** Derived from the Indian hemp plant, hashish is also known as marijuana. It is a natural plant and is consumed by smoking or eating. Hashish is one of the most widely used drugs in the world.
3. **Coca Bush:** Predominantly grown in Peru and Bolivia in

South America, which is considered its native region. Coca leaves can be chewed, coca paste can be smoked, and it can also be inhaled in powder form or injected.

4. **Khat:** A shrub that grows abundantly in mountainous regions such as Yemen. Khat leaves are typically chewed or smoked.
5. **Henbane:** Known as a narcotic and sedative plant, it is referred to as "hashish" in Egypt.
6. **Nutmeg:** The active narcotic substance in nutmeg is concentrated in its powder form.

### 1. Second Group: Prepared (Manufactured) Drugs

These are drugs that serve as substitutes for raw drugs, often comprising a mixture of two or more substances. The types include:

1. **Depressant Drugs (Sedatives or Tranquilizers):** Derived from barbituric acid, these are usually in the form of pills, tablets, or capsules.
2. **Solution:** Inhaled deeply, leading to a state of unconsciousness.
3. **Morphine:** One of the most important derivatives of opium, administered through subcutaneous injection.
4. **Heroin:** One of the most addictive drugs, typically in the form of a white powder, consumed through inhalation or injection after dissolving it in water.
5. **Cocaine:** Extracted from coca leaves, it is a white powder consumed through sniffing.

### Third Group: Synthetic Drugs

Natural or synthetic drugs can be either stimulants or depressants. There is a third type known as synthetic drugs, which are defined as drugs carrying the properties of both natural and synthetic drugs. They are manufactured in laboratories and chemical factories and consist of various substances, whether narcotic or non-narcotic. They are divided into:

1. **Central Nervous System Stimulants (Amphetamines):** Pharmaceutical preparations that increase human activity and enhance alertness. Their widespread use is due to this stimulating effect. Discontinuing use leads to negative reactions known as "crashing," such as insomnia and fatigue, prompting continued use. They are typically in the form of tablets consumed by swallowing or dissolving in water.
2. **Central Nervous System Depressants:** Pharmaceutical preparations that have a depressant effect on the nervous system, reducing nervous activity and aiding sleep. They are divided into:
  - a) **Hypnotics:** Usually in the form of tablets or capsules, they induce drowsiness and a desire to sleep, leading to addiction.
  - b) **Tranquilizers:** Provide sedation and calm nervous and psychological agitation. These drugs treat anxiety and tension, but misuse can cause negative side effects.
3. **Hallucinogenic Drugs:** Psychoactive substances that induce hallucinations upon consumption, deceiving vision and hearing to cause hallucinations, and providing a feeling of euphoria and tranquility.

### Chapter Two: Drugs in Iraq

The phenomenon of drug abuse is widespread across the world, and unfortunately, Iraq is no exception due to various factors contributing to this spread. However, there are also factors aiming to curb it. This research identifies these factors, divided into two sections: the first addresses the reasons for

the spread of drugs in Iraq, while the second discusses the decline of this phenomenon in Iraq.

### Section One: The Spread of Drugs in Iraq

Reasons for the Spread of Drugs in Iraq: Iraq's location and proximity to production areas have contributed to the spread of this phenomenon. In the north, there is Turkish opium, and in the east, there is Iranian hashish and opium, especially after drugs spread in Iran. In the south, Yemeni khat is prevalent. After the opening of the Suez Canal, Iraqi exports such as grains and dates, including opium, increased, indicating the spread of drug cultivation in Iraq. Iraq is a transit country between Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan (the Golden Crescent countries) and from there to the Arab Gulf states and Eastern European countries, especially after the American occupation. Hashish is one of the most common drugs in Iraq, consumed by a specific segment of people. Other types, such as opium, cocaine, and heroin, are used by higher social classes. The alarming spread of these drugs in Iraqi society, especially after the American occupation, necessitates intervention and intensified efforts by the Iraqi legislator and forces to limit this phenomenon.

### There are many reasons for the spread of drugs, including First: Psychological Reasons

1. **Psychological Stress:** The spread of knowledge in all aspects of life has an undeniable positive role, but it also contributes to the spread of drugs due to the accompanying pressures. These pressures have increased the anxiety and stress of individuals in society.
2. **Euphoria and Escape:** Users of these substances feel joy, happiness, and forgetfulness, which allows them to escape social and class disparities, alleviate psychological pressures, and cover other desires such as failure in life and inability to meet basic needs. Users delude themselves into fulfilling their desires through deceptive and illegitimate means.
3. **Sexual Gratification:** Studies have shown that most drug users aim to satisfy their sexual desires, and since drugs affect the brain and sensations, they help achieve this goal.
4. **Imitation of Others:** Many users, especially the youth, imitate celebrities and public figures who use drugs.

### Secondly, Social Reasons: In the social lives individuals lead, there are many reasons that lead them to drug use:

1. **Family:** Family serves as the foundation of communication between the individual and society, shaping their traditions and values. This influences personal behavior significantly, with drug abuse being a notable manifestation. Poor family relationships are a primary cause contributing to the spread of this phenomenon in societies, as they can lead individuals into addiction, thereby impacting the community.
2. **Friends:** Individuals often gravitate towards friendships that involve negative influences, which can lead them into addiction.
3. **Globalization:** Globalization plays a significant role in the spread of drugs through the profits generated by traffickers of these substances. Unlike before, drugs are no longer confined to specific locations, which has also led to drug traffickers themselves becoming addicted.

### The second issue: Decline of Drugs in Iraq

Scientific advancements have highlighted the numerous



harm of drugs, leading Iraqi legislators to advocate for their prohibition and combat. Additionally, a reason for the decline in drug use in Iraq is that drugs diminish dignity and masculinity. On another note, Islamic Sharia has prohibited these substances, drawing from verses such as "O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful" and "Satan only wants to cause between you animosity and hatred through intoxicants and gambling and to avert you from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. So will you not desist?" (Quranic references needed). Similarly, in another verse "They ask you about wine and gambling. Say, 'In them is great sin and [yet, some] benefit for people. But their sin is greater than their benefit.'" (Quranic references needed). In the noble Hadith, "Whatever intoxicates in large quantities is prohibited," it encompasses drugs as interpreted, and Muslim jurists agree on including drugs under alcohol as they impair the mind leading to a decline (references required). Mosques play an active role in this aspect as part of the Islamic educational system, serving as a scholarly institution for communities that prohibit drug use (references required). Moreover, Iraqi legislators have encouraged various treatment methods, Sanctions are among the deterrent measures to curb this social menace, and promoting prevention through education in schools, universities, and organizing scientific seminars to raise awareness about this social issue, the Iraqi legislator does not include drug offenses in the general amnesty law but imposes penalties up to life imprisonment, penalties are based on legal foundations, which Iraq has implemented, as the first legislation against drugs was introduced in 1933 under Law No. 12, and in response to the increasing threat posed by this phenomenon, further laws were enacted to combat drugs, the Iraqi Drug Law prohibits the cultivation of these four types of drugs in Article 2/1, stating ((prohibits the cultivation of opium, cannabis, coca leaf, and qat)), under the Iraqi Drug Law and specifically in Table 1, paragraph 53, morphine is prohibited, with exceptions for products containing less than 0.2%, in Table 1, paragraph 35, and in Table 4, paragraph 3, heroin is prohibited under Iraqi drug law, and in Table 1, paragraph 17, and in Table 3, paragraph 2, cocaine is prohibited except for 1.0%.

The Iraqi legislation and judiciary take a stance on synthetic drugs: These medications have been used for treatment, but their narcotic effects on users have led to widespread prevalence in the past two decades, prompting continuous efforts by the anti-drug agency to combat them. Especially since the United Nations Convention in Article 1 of 1971 defined psychoactive substances as "substances, whether natural or synthetic..." making their control a priority to protect society. However, Iraq's effective Law No. 68 of 1965 has been amended to strengthen drug laws, yet no specific law addresses synthetic drugs. Synthetic drugs fall under the Pharmacy Profession Law No. 40 of 1970, as amended, which originally did not address these issues until the enactment of Law No. 39 of 1994, further amended by Decree No. 135 of 1996, which prohibits their trade unless sourced from recognized suppliers.

These laws signify the Iraqi legislator's intervention in combating drugs, alongside ongoing efforts by Iraqi security forces to enforce laws preventing the spread of drugs within the state of Iraq.

## Conclusion

We have come to understand the issue of drugs, which have

become a noticeable affliction in Iraqi society. The Iraqi legislator has utilized penalties effectively to curb the spread of this serious problem. Additionally, religious principles that prohibit these intoxicants have been leveraged to support Iraqi law in limiting this phenomenon. We also urge the Iraqi security forces to continue their diligent efforts to combat this issue, which will contribute to its decline and reduce its prevalence in Iraq.

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