INTRODUCTION

Illicit trafficking is the illegal trade or transportation of drugs across borders. This can range from drugs entering Africa from international waters or the movement of these drugs within Africa. There are different types of drugs; however, the issue is limited to only illegal recreational drugs. Trafficking in Africa exists since the 1980s and was first introduced by utilizing the European route as well as various other sea routes coming in from Latin America. [1]

There is a global market dedicated to drug trade however it needs to be kept in mind that the focus is Africa, a whole functional organization is dedicated to the cultivation, manufacturing, importing and exporting of such substances. Numerous quantities and types of drugs are traded to yield a profit. It is quiet prominently present in Western, Eastern and Southern Africa. The illicit trade is leading to higher availability of illegal drugs and resulting in increased substance abuse that is sweeping away the chance of growth from Africa. [2]

Illicit trafficking also hurts the economy of a nation as well as the social stability, this is because a nation loses a lot of its working potential, also holes are created in the economy due to the inclusion of black money in trade. Illicit drug trafficking also leads to more widespread illegal activities and an increase in violence within social groups or a nation. Another issue that needs to be addressed is corruption and this gives a rise to the ever existing disparities in Africa. Illicit trafficking also leads to the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa due to needle sharing and drug abuse. [3]

KEY TERMS

Ending

This may refer to the last or final part of something however it must be kept in mind that the regulation of illicit trafficking of drugs is an emerging issue and therefore we must concentrate on combatting the issue rather than aiming for direct elimination as that may serve as a long term purpose.
Illicit

Illicit is a synonymous word for illegal, something that is prohibited by the law.

Trafficking

Trafficking is the trade of illegal materials in a concealed environment. Without informing proper authorities or having a license.

Drugs

There are many types of drugs however trafficking only exists specifically for recreational drugs such as Cannabis, cocaine and heroin that are taken for pleasure.

Africa

Is a continent that comprises of but not limited to Western, Eastern, Northern, Southern and Central Africa.

International Council on Alcohol and Addictions (ICAA) [4]

The oldest existing non-government organization that focuses on “preventing and reducing the harmful use and effects of alcohol, tobacco, other drugs and addictive behaviors on individuals, families, communities and society.”

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) [5]

Established in 1997 by the United Nations to control drug abuse and prevent crimes across the globe.

Drug Cartel

Association of drug manufactures that aim to maintaining the supply and prices of illegal drugs and have a joint venture and control of illicit trafficking.

BACKGROUND

Drug abuse and consumption started in about the 1980s in Africa however there are some drugs that were used by locals for medicinal or cultural purposes. Africa went a drastic lifestyle change as it moved towards development and urbanization however along with the benefits also came the adverse effects of modernization. This changed the perception of numerous Africans and how they perceived recreational substances. They became more open to the idea of a simulated high or pleasure. In the beginning, drugs were produced locally however the international producers started to aim for Africa when they realized the potential of profit by having their drugs sold in Africa. International trade came through the European
route or the sea route from the Indian Ocean. In addition, local drug producers also started to grow their business; however, as these drugs became illegal the burden to maintain profit resorted them to start an illicit business and since the 1990’s prominent growth has been seen in illicit trafficking of drugs and the growth increases exponentially as more people are attracted towards it because people are misinformed or misguided about the consequences of drug abuse. Africa also continues to become a transit stop for drugs transported across the globe, as now Latin drugs enter Africa first and then move towards Europe or Asia. The Illicit trafficking of drugs has led to a lot of corruption and political instability causing politicians to support some drug producers, making the task of ending the illicit trade more difficult. Another reason for the ease of trafficking in Africa is non-cooperation between countries on borders and law enforcement. Traffickers unlike in Europe or America are able to exploit this and use it to advance their business. As drug enforcement grows stronger in more developed countries traffickers are looking to increase supply in Africa as it is such a soft and easy target for them. [6]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Introduction of recreational drugs in Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Resolution in UN passed to control drug abuse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid 1990's</td>
<td>Boom in the drug business in Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Late 1990’s</td>
<td>Implementation of laws on a national level to control the spread of drugs.</td>
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<td>1995</td>
<td>Africa becomes a center of drug trade and a transit for many drugs flowing around the world</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Drugs begin to be exported out of Africa</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>UNODC established by the UN</td>
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**PARTIES INVOLVED**

**Latin America**

An international organization of drugs has been established, to manufacture, import and export drugs; however, in order to control the price and amount of production just like any other free market the producers have established a cartel and this originates from Latin American countries, mainly Mexico and Colombia. Due to increased corruption and weak law enforcement Latin America became the best place for drugs production to thrive as they have abundance of land as well as ideal conditions for growing the plants that are used for producing drugs. Their supply was mainly focused in the United States of America; however, due to increased border security in the United States of America they decided to move eastwards to Africa and continue to use it as a port for the drug consumption of drugs and as the supply for drugs internationally. [7]
West Africa

West Africa is most impacted by the illicit trafficking of drugs in Africa as it became one of the first nations to become infected by the drug outbreak. Drugs formerly entered through Europe however through time they started to flow in from Latin America and travel inside Africa spreading rapidly throughout the continent. Ghana is one of the most affected countries by the abuse of drugs as it continues to lose a huge proportion of its working class as well as youth due to the presence of drug abuse. Even the political system has been influenced and corrupted. Development has become slower over the years as potential is not being achieved. The drug money is ruining the economies of the nations present in West Africa. This condition can be seen throughout West Africa as drugs enter Africa from that route and then travel through to different parts of Africa. [9]

Eastern Africa

East Africa is not a center for import; however, it continues to become the ideal place for traffickers to export their goods internationally. Africa has provided them with a fertile environment for rapid growth in production and distribution as well as consumption. Weak border control and ineffective border boundaries along with limited regional co-operation leads to traffickers exploiting the eastern region as they are able to move the drugs that come in through Western Africa and then move it towards Asia through Eastern Africa. Two major airports in Ethiopia and Kenya are used as drug transit points to get drugs transported to Pakistan, Thailand and India. The lack of central authority in these countries results in ease for traffickers, they even practice using courier and postal services to transport drugs without authorities being able to catch them. The west has a strong influence on the east as they are actively engaged with the Latinos and are able to impose their drug authority on the East and are mostly responsible for the emergence of drugs in the East. This has been worsening as all attempts to reduce trafficking have not been as effective in the east. [9]

Southern Africa

Southern African nations have become a destination as well as a transit port. South Africa in particular has a lot of drugs coming in through trafficking from the west or east or directly from Latin America, however drugs are also forwarded to India and south-east Asia through the sea route. South Africa is one of the most developed countries in Africa and it also faces the issue of drug abuse and its trafficking. Countries in this region have weak border control as a lot of it is through forests making it easier for individuals to traffic. Corruption also plays a major role in the success of drug trafficking leading to social inequality and increased crime rates. [10]

The primary step taken has been to educate the people about drug abuse and its consequences; however, as drugs keep on continuing to flow it becomes a hard task for trends and addictions to change. Rehabilitation centers have also been set-up for struggling addicts in an attempt to get them to stop pursuing such an addiction. Along with UNODC and other western aid agencies officials were able to seize 760kg of drugs and 8000 offenders in only West Africa, 2012. [11]
Countries are aiming to continuously strengthen their law enforcement and become more efficient in catching traffickers, they have been able to arrest high-level traffickers as well as less protected traffickers. However, due to corruption some people still remain untouched even though they are the masterminds behind the illicit trafficking of drugs. They are able to strike deals with the authorities as well as the enforcement and this continues to be a huge hole in security that needs to be dealt with. In a lot of situations addicts are thrown in just to improve statistics and show progress. Some governments are also stuck with classic Latin American laws that are ineffective and need to be thought upon and strengthened. The drug policies that the countries follow are not strong enough to deal with such an issue and their approach is too weak to work towards ending illicit trafficking. However, since 2001 co-operation between African states has improved immensely and there is hope for a strong and united effort. [12]

Traffickers were able to take advantage of this limited communication; however, West African Joint Operation initiative (WAJO) has been established to build co-operation between West African countries. African governments have also started to collaborate with other countries such as the United States of America to move towards eradicating this problem. WAJO was able to reduce the explosive nature of the spread and limit the damage sustained by the continent. More experienced nations and organizations have also been able to oversee nations struggling with the issue of illicit trafficking of drugs, for example, Guinea Bissau has been successful in raiding a lot of drug safe-houses and supporting local law enforcement. [13]

In 2008 West African countries as a co-operation have planned to strengthen the response as well as increase their funding as they have come to realize the seriousness of the issue at hand, resulting in attempts to strengthen border control and make borders more secure etc. Even after all these efforts, a huge change cannot be seen on drug abuse or trafficking and the substances continue to flow in Africa, through Africa and out of Africa. [14]

### POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

There are numerous possible solutions however there is a huge need to incorporate all of them together to be able to have an effective outcome towards ending illicit trafficking in Africa.

- Stronger functioning as well are more efficient working of the UNODCC to have a greater impact.
- Better public education to inform youth from an earlier age about substance abuse and limit the possibility of upcoming addicts as well as reduce the future market for suppliers.
- Rehabilitation centers need to also be improved and maintained in order to be able to monitor addicts and limit their access to suppliers.
- Strengthening corporations with local as well international aid agencies such as the US and EU in order to work together towards limiting the mobility and freedom of traffickers intercontinentally.
- Increase Regional Corporation on a local and regional level to work collaboratively towards being able to limit the number of traffickers.
• Strengthen law enforcement and border security to lessen ease in mobility for drug traffickers.

• To discover the routes of traffickers as they have fixed routes and therefore be able to locate the routes and shut the route down limiting the spread of drugs.

• Tracking down drug traffickers by collaborating on an intelligence level and being able to catch the whole group.

• This is open to more research and the implementation of other methods in order to combat and end the illicit trafficking of drugs.

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