

UVA LAW | War-on-Drugs Podcast

SANHO TREE: Thank you for having me here today. It's a pleasure to be here. I've been working on the alternatives to the war on drugs for about 21 years now.

It's in, some ways, very depressing. And in other ways, we've made tremendous progress. So when I first began working in this field, on cannabis legalization, for instance, popular support was less than 30%. Today, it's over 66%.

So in that sense, we've taken tremendous strides. In other ways, we've gone backwards. And other parts of the world have really regressed quite a bit in terms of their approach to this. I'm going to talk about three different case studies, and try to compress an hour lecture into 20 minutes here. But I'll talk about the supply side, the cultivators who grow these crops, producers, the interdiction efforts, and then the demand side, and the consumption side.

So politicians often say, well, we know where the drugs are coming from. Why don't we go down there and destroy it before they can be turned into drugs, and reach our streets, and hurt our kids, et cetera, et cetera? And Plan Colombia is a really good example of how this has failed.

So beginning in the late '90s at the tail end of the Clinton administration, they began talking about a billion dollar militarized aid package to Colombia to help fight the war on drugs, which was deeply intertwined with a, at that point, four decade old civil war. And the main instrument of policy was the crop duster. So we sprayed millions of acres of the second most biodiverse country in the world trying to eradicate the coca bush, before it could be turned into coca paste, and refined into cocaine, and smuggled out.

It hasn't really worked. Today, there is as much, if not more, coca than when we began nearly 20 years ago. And so without maintaining that pressure of constant battering of people and the environment, it's not possible to reduce the coca cultivation, primarily because these people, the farmers who produce this stuff, live in very remote areas.

If you walked out of this building today, you'd see signs of the state in every direction you looked, paved roads, running water, police, et cetera. There are many parts of Colombia you could walk for days and not see any sign of the state. And so the things that we take for granted, in terms of what it takes to get farmers to grow other crops, besides cocoa, or poppies, or cannabis, simply don't exist.

We're talking about people who live on a couple of dollars a day. They're living in remote

areas, sometimes far, far away from anything that you would consider a road. Sorry, I wasn't able to hook up the projector today. I'm on an iPad.

But these remote areas, it makes good economic sense for these farmers to grow coca, because doing that, you can cut down a couple of acres of Amazon rainforest, do slash and burn agriculture, and plant some coca bushes. From that, you harvest the leaves. And using very basic chemicals, you don't need an advanced degree for this by any means.

It's basically sulfuric acid, gasoline, ammonia, concrete, a few other nasty chemicals, they can make a paste from this coca leaf. And so you can reduce a couple of acres down to less than a kilo of paste. That is easily transportable you could put into a backpack or walk to the nearest village, or go on horseback, and sell that paste.

Sometimes the middlemen will come directly to your farm, pay you cash on the barrelhead, and take it away for. You that solves your transportation problems. Instead, we've been demanding these farmers grow other crops, so-called alternative development.

But we've been demanding they do this in the context of a reality that most technocrats don't understand. They've never spent much time in these regions. And so they're demanding that farmers grow hundreds of kilos of fruits and vegetables to transport on vehicles they literally don't have, over roads that very often just don't exist, and to sell in markets, both domestic and export, they can't get access to. And even if they could, these farmers would then have to compete against cheap agribusiness imports, very often subsidized by our tax dollars through various trade agreements, against which these peasant farmers don't stand a chance. So that's one reason this hasn't worked, in terms of eradication policies.

Nonetheless, we've been spraying and spraying them, up until 2015, when the World Health Organization linked the active ingredient in the main chemicals being used, Roundup, the chemicals called [INAUDIBLE], linked back to cancer. So at that point, the Colombian government ceased aerial fumigation. But they're thinking of resuming it now, using drones or aerial eradication again, because the manual eradication where groups of people, men are literally, 20 minutes, they'll dig up your farm, that has proven less effective and also quite hazardous for everybody involved.

They tend to get shot. There are landmines in place, et cetera. So they want to do this by air. So that hasn't worked. There's no expectation that we'll continue working given these dynamics, because they haven't dealt with why people are doing this.

So that gives you a little sense of the futility of tackling this on the supply side. There are others who say well, we should interdict these drugs. If you can't stop it on the ground-- and keep in mind, Colombia is bigger than Texas and California combined. The same is true of Bolivia. The same is true of Peru.

All three countries are enormous. But you watch these Capitol Hill briefings. And they've got a map, and they point, we'll just eradicate here, here, and here, move these here, here, and that will problem solve. These are vast expanses.

Try passing an edict to ban tomatoes being grown in Texas and California. See if you can eradicate every last tomato plant. It's not possible.

So given that we can't eradicate drugs at the source, and even if we could by some miracle eradicate this from Colombia, and Peru, and Bolivia, sub-Saharan Africa is ripe for the picking. A century ago, the world's largest coca plantations were not in South America. They had nothing to do with the Andes.

They were in Indonesia. Formosa, Taiwan where I was born, had large coca plantations. I only learned this recently. Iwo Jima had coca plantations. And Hawaii had small plots as well.

But that was the Dutch and the Japanese, mostly, that were growing the coca back then for cocaine for medicinal use. So it grows in many different soils and climates. So if we can't eradicate this stuff at the source, then some people say we should interdict it, stop it at the borders, build a wall, for instance.

If you consider the idea of a wall to stop these drugs, this is essentially a Bronze Age technology. My people know walls. They don't work that long. It's easy to devise countermeasures to these walls.

And we already have a lot of fence on the border area that was put up under Bush and Obama. Trump wants to make an taller, bigger wall, with pointy spikes, and all these other things. But the counter measures have always existed to that wall. One of the first things they did was build ramps onto flatbed trucks, literally drive up to the wall, extend the ramp over the wall.

And I've got photos, unfortunately you can't see, but of SUVs literally driving over the wall on these ramps. There's also Roman era countermeasures, catapults. So they build catapults or

trebuchets that launch huge bails of drugs right over the wall. Some of them have even been clamped onto the wall itself, you pull a lever down, pull the string, lowers the arm, and you put your drugs on there. And it flips it right over the wall.

They've also adapted the technologies from sports stadiums. So you've seen t-shirt cannons and that sort of thing. The traffickers have large cannon, pneumatic cannons, on the back of pickup trucks, or mounted in vans. And some of them are pretty big diameter in diameter. So they can blow a 100 pound bale of drugs right over that wall.

There's also lots of other countermeasures. Below the wall, narco tunnels, we've discovered more than 100 criss-crossing the US Mexican border. And there are probably another couple of hundred that are in operation.

Once these things are open, they can move drugs 24/7. They can also repatriate cash southbound, as well as guns and ammunition. These tunnels are incredibly sophisticated these days.

They've got rail systems, ventilation, drainage systems. So they found one in San Diego, Tijuana a border a couple of years ago. Before it opened, and they found 40 tons of marijuana on the Mexican side ready to cross the United States. Gives you a sense of the scale of these things.

Nowadays, they're not smuggling much marijuana. In fact, there is evidence it's going the other direction because the Mexican marijuana is such poor quality that consumers are demanding US legal product instead. But there are tunnels.

There are above ground options. So in the old days, they would use small planes, for instance, to ferry drugs. We got better at detecting them. It got to the point where they would even buy an old airliner on its last legs, and crash land it on the other side.

The plane was essentially disposable because the amount of drugs you can put on there, and the payload, the profits on the other side, were so extreme that it made no difference to them. They could just buy another plane, if they needed.

Nonetheless, we got better at detecting those planes. And so they switched to ultra lights, those lawnmower engine powered light aircraft, that have dropped cages underneath them. So they can hold a couple hundred pounds of drugs. The ultra lights go over the wall, or the

fence, but under the radar.

And they see their accomplice on the other side. They pull the lever. It drops the drugs.

And we got better at detecting those. So now they're moving to drones. And the drones are not the kind of hobbyist drones that you're familiar with. Some of the newer industrial drones can-- I think the maximum thus far has been 600 pound payload. We're talking about serious amounts of drugs that could be moved by drones.

And I think in the future, you've seen these flying cars, and flying taxis being debuted in Dubai, and other places, like it's an Uber and auto pilot taxis, someday I think you'll see a lot of those along the border area just shuttling back and forth. It's very difficult to stop these things.

There's also the maritime route. In the old days, they would use fishing boats and try to hide drugs underneath frozen shrimp or seafood. We got better at inspecting those. So they started using speedboats, cigarette boats, that could outrun Coast Guard vessels.

So we gave the Coast Guard helicopters and 50-caliber sniper rifles to shoot their engine blocks. So then they switched to semi-submersibles. These are not true submarines. They're mostly made of fiberglass.

And they're enormous. They can hold six to 12 tons of drugs per run. And they basically stay 90% below water. And the conning tower remains above.

That's where they get the air and they navigate. And during the day, they'll just throw a blue tarp over themselves and blend in with the ocean. And they travel by night.

So as one DEA official said, you try finding something the size of a log floating in the Pacific Ocean. Nonetheless, we got better at detecting those. That small conning tower is enough to get a radar signature off of.

So they've now developed fully functional proper submarines that could dive up to 50 feet below water. And, again, these can move five, 10 tons easily. We've caught one of those. They're very difficult to capture.

But they're also moving towards remotely operated narco torpedoes, they're called, or sleds. Basically, it looks like a torpedo. And sometimes they're bolted underneath a freighter. They found some of those in Belgium.

So unless you send divers underneath the ship, searching the ship itself, you'll find nothing. But even still, sometimes they do look under the ships. So they switched to using very long cables that tow this torpedo, or sled, behind the boat. And very often, there will be two or three boats involved in this.

So if the first boat is somehow stopped, you'll find nothing by searching the boat, unless you send a diver underneath then you'll see the cable. But if they do that, they just release the cable. And the torpedo floats away.

It's got a homing mechanism on there that surfaces every couple of hours and emits an encrypted GPS signal. So the follow up vessels, they come and pick up the cargo that way. So you see the problem. We're getting into a lot of different countermeasures that's very easy to defend against a wall.

Most importantly, the silliness of the wall in general, let me see if I can find a good illustration of this. Donald Trump initially said he wanted a big, beautiful concrete wall, 30 feet high, solid wall. You don't want to put a solid wall in desert, number one, because of flash flooding, dunes. Google flash flooding deserts if you don't know what I'm talking about.

Anyway, and border patrol convinced him, reasonably, that having a solid wall is not a good idea because you need to see what's on the other side, people are amassing, if they're up to something. So then Trump said, well, we'll all have a slatted wall. Here's an illustration of him, you can't see this very closely. But that's the new wall that he's building.

You see the slats? See the four inch gaps between the slats? If you're a drug trafficker, what's your first counter you're going to be? 3 and 1/2 inch wide drug packages.

You'll literally hand them through the wall. But his followers believe this is going to somehow solve our drug problem. But let's give him the benefit of the doubt.

Let's assume that somehow this wall magically stops 50% of the heroin coming into the United States. That's a good thing, right? Good? I think it would be absolutely disastrous.

And I think fatalities and overdoses will spike off the charts if that actually happens. Some of that is why it won't work, because they haven't addressed the demand. The demand is still there.

What's killing people today in terms of opioids? It's not heroin. It's fentanyl.

Fentanyl is about 50 times more powerful than heroin. It's easy to smuggle from China and other places. You can get it through the dark web. It's comes in the post.

And little tiny amounts are enough to go a very long way. So dealers have been mixing the fentanyl into the heroin. And it's very difficult to mix this properly. So people get much higher doses than they thought, or get lower doses. It's not very consistent.

And that's what's called causing people to die. A couple of grains of sand worth of fentanyl is enough to kill you. So if you are able to stop have the heroin United States, and you still have high demand, what's the logical market response going to be from traffickers?

They're going to take the remaining heroin that does get through and cut even more fentanyl into this. And our overdose rates will skyrocket. And so Trump is actually trying to go after the fentanyl, going after some of the precursor chemicals, putting pressure on the Chinese government to clamp down on these things.

But there are counter measures for fentanyl. There are analogs that are far more problematic and more powerful. One of them is car fentanyl. You may have heard of it.

Its used as, basically, elephant tranquilizer, or buffalo tranquilizer, large animals. And that's hundreds of times more powerful than heroin. And that's turning up in our domestic heroin supply right now.

Luckily, it's not a huge amount, because fentanyl is somewhat safer. But if you're able to stop the fentanyl, there's always the substitutes. It's called the iron law of prohibition.

It's a lesson we should have learned through alcohol prohibition, that as long as there's demand, the market will find innovative solutions, work arounds, that are substitutes that are very often more potent, easier to produce, and harder to stop. In a way that alcohol prohibition helped transform a nation of beer drinkers and wine drinkers into a nation of hard liquor drinkers, if you were a bootlegger during prohibition, the last thing you wanted to smuggle was beer.

Giant keg of beer on your back, you'll be spotted. You'll go to jail. If you're going to take that risk of going to jail, you want the most potent form of alcohol available, booze or moonshine, or grain alcohol. And that's the way it also works in drugs.

In some ways, when I was in high school and Ronald Reagan was president, and his number one drug enemy was not cocaine. It was marijuana coming from Jamaica and Colombia. So he through the military and Coast Guard into South Florida, tried to cut off the shipments of marijuana. Didn't take long for the Colombian smugglers to realize, we got something else here that's a lot more compact.

It's more profitable. It's not big, and bulky, and smelly like these giant piles of marijuana. And it's addictive for some people. You get a repeat customer.

And so that, of course, was cocaine. In some ways, our war on marijuana helped popularize the explosion of cocaine in the 1980s. And in still other ways, our war on cocaine helped popularize the poor person's cocaine, crack.

And in still other ways, our war on crack helped re-popularize the poor person's crack, methamphetamines. Each time, you end up with a more difficult to stop, more problematic drug. And so that's the utility of the supply side policies of interdiction, as well as proper eradication.

And so there are others are saying, well, we should go after the users. Go after demand. That's how you do it.

And I just got back a few days ago from 10 days in the Philippines, where they're waging a very brutal drug war. President Rodrigo Duterte, who came into power six months before Trump. But he was very similar to Trump, similar to Bolsonaro in Brazil, tough talking, basically a fascist, populist, with easy answers.

And so he's convinced people through Facebook and other means, and Philippines is highly network on Facebook, lots of disinformation, he's told people that if you smoke shabu, which is what they call methamphetamines there for more than six months, your brain will shrink the size of a baby's brain, or even a walnut I've heard sometimes. And, therefore, once that happens, there's no possibility of rehabilitation. We've got to kill them.

And so lots of people who don't know any better, just throw up their arms. And say, well, what are we going to do? We're not a rich country.

And I told them, one of the most amazing things about the Philippines, its most precious resource are its people, especially its young people. They graduate a lot of people in the public health sector. If you looked at the US medical system, if you eliminated all the Filipinos

and Filipinos who work as doctors, radiologists, pharmacists, nurses, our health care system would be in deep trouble.

So I said, why not graduate a whole new generation of counselors, of social workers, to deal with a lot of the preconditions, the root causes of why people are using these drugs to begin with, rather than trying to execute, murder your way out of this problem? And in the nearly three years President Duterte has been an office, he has killed through extrajudicial killing, shooting people in the streets basically, about 30,000 people, 20,000 to 30,000 by many estimates.

Only 6,800 are officially acknowledged by the Philippine police. The rest are under investigation and will never be investigated. They don't have the resources or the will to investigate these other cases. And so that's the futility of trying to either incarcerate your way out, or execute your way out, of this problem.

In 2007, 2008, the Iranian drug czar, not a particularly liberal or progressive place in terms of drug policy, did something very shocking. He authorized the installation of vending machines throughout Tehran to help the 2.8 million people who are addicted to opioids opiates over there by allowing them to purchase low cost, clean needles, and condoms, and alcohol swabs, and bandages, and that sort of thing.

So you can find vending machines in Tehran selling these things, because they had a huge HIV explosion they were looking at. So you can either do that, or deal with a much, much worse problem. And then in 2017, the Iranian legislature also pushed to end the use of hangings as a way of dealing with low level drug offenses.

They still execute a lot of people. But thousands of low level drug sellers were spared. So if Iran can turn around, there's hope for the Philippines and other countries as well.

Just generally speaking, I'll just wrap up. One of the main reasons we haven't been able to win the war on drugs is that we forced this economy to evolve at a lightning pace. The drug economy kind of evolved under Darwinian principles, selection of the fittest. And decade after decade, as we throw in more policing resources at this problem, the kinds of people we've ended up capturing tend to be the people who are dumb enough to get caught.

No offense if anyone's ever been busted for anything here. But the expression on the street is that the dealer who uses loses. Don't get high on your own supply, because you'll make

mistakes.

You'll get caught. You'll get sloppy. You'll get caught. You'll be out of the game.

Well, conversely, for decades now the kinds of people we've missed as we keep escalating this war on drugs tend to be the people who are the most innovative, the most adaptive, the most cunning, not necessary the most violent. Violence is not a good prescription for longevity in this business. But the people who are the most innovative and adaptable.

They're the ones that evolve, and evolve at a very rapid pace. So it's almost as if we've had this policy of artificial selection. We've been selectively breeding super traffickers for decades.

So that's why you can't win a war on drugs through this blanket application of law enforcement and military force. You end up creating tremendous efficiency in the drug market that shouldn't exist otherwise. It's kind of like an XPRIZE, you know the term XPRIZE where a billionaire puts up a prize?

First one who can build a solar powered plane, go across country, gets a \$10 million award, or whatever prize. Well, the US government has basically established the ultimate XPRIZE. If you can find ways to penetrate a border security, then you stand to make not millions, but billions, of dollars tax free.

And that's what we've done. And it's not a smart thing to do. In fact, when I talk to some people in Homeland Security, privately they'll say, this is really dangerous stuff we're doing with the drug war. Right now, there's really no incentive for these traffickers to work with terrorist organizations to move WMDs or other things through those tunnels.

But someday, if there's some lieutenant who's operating a tunnel, might be bribeable, or might be convinced to move a package they think is drugs but is actually WMD or something else, these are risks we should not be taking. And terrorists, by themselves, do not have the resources or the ability to make these tunnels. That's the drug traffickers. And so we create the market incentives for them to do that.

And so that's why we can't win a war going after the little fish. You end up breeding super traffickers. So some people say, well, go after the kingpins instead. That'll do the trick.

So we've been doing that for decades, both domestically and internationally. We worked with the Colombian government to break up the Medellin cartel, the Cali cartel. These were the

two, dreaded giant cocaine cartels that ruled the cocaine economy of the globe, right? And we got rid of them.

So you think they should have at least put a dent in the problem. More drugs than ever started coming out of Colombia. And then we had that Plan Colombia. Why?

Well, what he essentially did was remove the two big monopolies. And we opened up an incredibly lucrative economic space to hundreds of smaller operators during the first Bush administration, rather George W. Bush. There were so many smaller operators that took over that economic space in Colombia we couldn't even count the number, much less to infiltrate and disrupt them.

Many of these were boutique cartels, many family run, vertically integrated, each with their own list of officials they bribed, their own smuggling routes. And so that's the problem with going after the kingpins. You end up democratizing this economy.

And, in fact, there's an internal Homeland Security study that showed that an attack on kingpins in Mexico, going after those cartels, has actually increased the amount of violence, and done nothing to reduce the amount of drugs coming in, because once you destabilize a cartel, then you have lieutenants and rival cartels, plotting to take over that territory, the turf. Then you get turf battles and internal struggles.

The only thing worse than organized crime is disorganized crime. And that's what we've been seeing in Mexico. President Calderon, he was kind of the original Trumpist. I'm going to throw 50,000 troops at this problem. I'll show them.

That was in late 2006. And since then, more than 200,000 people have been killed in this drug war in Mexico. The government stopped counting, because it's too hard to disaggregate who was killed through drug violence, versus kidnapping, versus other types of crime. But an awful lot of people have died since then, so much so that by the end of President Calderon's term in 2012, his final address to the UN General Assembly, he basically-- watch the video of the speech, if you can find it.

He talks about the failure of the war on drugs. And he tried harder than anybody. And he talked about the need for market control of these substances, and regulation. That's diplomatic code word for, basically, ending drug prohibition, or legalization.

This year, all 31 agencies and programs the United Nations came out with a consensus

statement against criminalization of drug possession. They recommended decriminalization across the board for users, because if you believe that drugs cause harm to the individual, then what sense does it make the mistake to harm them even more, by giving them a criminal record, making them associate with other criminals, and ruining their health opportunities?

If you drive them underground, it's much harder for them to receive care or to seek out access to treatment, or other services that could actually improve their lives. So that, in a nutshell, is why we haven't been winning this war on drugs, and some of that dynamics behind that. But, anyway, I think I've used up my time. I'd be happy to try to take some questions later. Thank you so much.

TERESA GARCIA Good afternoon. I would like to thank UVA school of law and the organizers of the event for
CASTRO: inviting me to this human rights week. And, today, I'm going to talk a little bit more on the gender side, and women incarceration, and the disproportionate consequences of the war on drugs on women.

But first, let me tell you a little bit more about our work and our project. As Alex mentioned, I work at the Washington office in Latin America. It's a research and advocacy human rights organization. And WALA was founded in the '70s after the coup in Chile. And we have been researching about drug policies for decades.

So why to focus on women and incarceration? And while doing this research, we realize that it varies per country. But from 30% to 70% of women who has been incarcerated in Latin America is for drug offenses.

So four years ago, we decided to put together a regional working group with experts from different backgrounds, human rights, feminist, drug policy reform folks, to do more research on these issues of drug policy women and incarceration. So our first product was a guide for reform, which was with-- it has particular policy recommendations for policymakers.

And more lately, we have been working more with affected communities. So, for instance, in July of this year, we put together the first ever regional workshop with around 45 formerly incarcerated women from eight different countries, including eight women from the US, from the National Council of Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls, which was extremely powerful. And the idea was just bringing them together so they could share their experiences, and also strategies for organizing, and for this movement of criminal justice

reform.

And the first thing that I want to say is that it's really hard to get accurate information, disaggregated by the kind of offenses that women and men have committed. So most of the information that I'm going to be saying is from Latin America, since we did a deep dive of government statistics. But there is a lack of information about some of these issues.

So, first of all, according to the word female prisoner release, between 2000 and 2017, worldwide the total female population increased by 53.3%, while that of men increased by only 19.6%. So there is a disproportionate impact on women's incarcerations. This is the same information, disaggregated by continent. And as you can see, except for the case of Europe where the increase was only 3.5, the increase in incarceration worldwide it's been astonishing.

So we cannot explain the increase in female prison population base on increasing general population. So based on our studies and our research, one of the driving forces behind female incarceration in the whole world are the harsh and disproportionate drug laws, some of the issues that Sanho was talking about before. And so these are-- there's a list of countries in Latin America, and the percentage that women who have committed drug offenses, drug-related offenses, compared to the prison population.

And we can see that in countries like Panama and Costa Rica, Venezuela, Brazil, Peru, and Chile, more than 50% of the women who are in prison are there for drug offenses. When we compare women and men, we can also see how the women are disproportionately affected. The yellow here represent women.

And the blue represent men. And, for instance, in countries like Brazil, you can see the difference of 68% of women for drug related offenses, versus 26%. In some of countries like Costa Rica, the different percentage is more than 40%. So that's what we mean when with we say that the drug laws have disproportionately impacted women.

We have to also be aware that there are populations and special risks, including indigenous communities, black communities, trans, lesbians, and LGBT communities, and migrant women, who face specific of risk at the criminal justice system. And we have done some research on that, particularly on trans women in prison, because there's not much information about it. But these populations are facing other vulnerabilities. And we can talk a little bit more about it.

In Latin American, sentences practice has been exported and imported from the US practices. And sometimes, the sentences are totally disproportionate. And they fail to distinguish, for instance, if the crime was violent, the gravity of the crime committed, the substance that was involved, and the level of leadership in the drug trafficking organizations. So, for instance, according to the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, around 83% of drug offenses are only for possession.

It's not drug trafficking. And in our research, we have found that people incarcerated because they're selling small quantities of drugs, sometimes they have longer sentences than people who have committed murder. So who are these women? And who is in prison in Latin America for drug offenses?

So this information is based on a survey conducted by Inter American Development Bank. And 87 of them are the primary caregivers for dependents, children, and the elderly. 72 have committed nonviolent offenses. 62 are the first time offenders.

56 have experienced, or are victims of, domestic violence. And the factors that led women's incarceration for drug offenses, in general, and this is also across of the Americas, so most of them come from the level of education they are under, and unemployed. They are victims of asymmetric power relations.

Sometimes, they have drug dependency or mental issues. They are victims of coercion and domestic violence. We can see in our videos, but from other experiences that we have had, and they lack effective legal counsel. And sometimes, they don't even have the means to afford effective legal representation. And they come from conditions of poverty and inequality.

So the trends in Asia sometimes are even more alarming. And, for instance, in Thailand 82 of the women prisoners are detained for drug related offenses, and 78 are first time offenders, and 93 are convicted. So I just want to wrap it up, because we would like to have some time for question and answers. But the current drug policies just perpetrate this cycle of poverty and violence among women.

So most of them come to the drug trade because of the lack of economic opportunities. And then they are affected by disproportionate and harsh sentences. As I mentioned, sometimes they can carry longer sentences than people that have committed rape or murder.

Then it has a disproportionate impact in their families, their children, the elderly, because most

of the time they are the caregivers. So the bones in the communities are broken. And they have lot of issues, and challenges, difficulty re-entering the society. They cannot find formal jobs.

They can find housing. They need sometimes health support. They need mental support counseling.

They need their networks to reconstruct their life, which the reentry programs in the prisons, most of the time-- not to say not always never that they work to provide these services and these skills for them. And then as a result of desperation, sometimes they go again to the drug policy. So we consider that a more humane approach based on a human rights framework would be much more beneficial for them.

And as Sanho said, a different approach to drug policy, and broader drug policy reform, would be one of them. But we have also done research of an alternative to incarceration, how to promote transformative and restorative justice frameworks, how to do more community led initiatives, to address these kind of conflicts in a different way. So I would leave it to that, and thank you so much.