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## TRANSNATIONAL CRIME IN THAILAND: THE CASE OF THE AFRICAN DRUG SYNDICATES

Ekapol Panjamanond

Graduate School of Development Administration, NIDA

ekapolnote@gmail.com

### Abstract

Narcotics problem is one of the most serious problems in Thailand which every government put enormous budget to solve the issue. Numbers of policies has been adopted in order to cope with drugs situation in Thailand. However, the problem still exists and cause massive problems to Thai society such as health issue, economics problem and other crimes. Unfortunately, narcotics problem getting even more complicated than before due to the social change which resulted from “globalization”. Globalization is the process of relationship between countries and people in the world with combining markets, production and resource all over the world by utilizing through the international trading system, moving labor and international fund. Globalization leads to the reduction of transportation cost, advance telecommunication system and shift in labor; which shapes local crime into transnational crime. African drug syndicates usually use advance telecommunication technology to commit transnational drug trafficking to avoid detection of the authorities, which regrettably works. African drug syndicates have become greater problem to law enforcement around the world, as the rising number of cases, the number of members around the globe and the sophisticated operational patterns. Thai authorities also found difficulties in suppression African drug syndicates because of language barrier and methods they use in smuggling drugs. This paper discusses why the African drug syndicate has chosen to operate in Thailand and what this syndicate’s operational patterns are so that proper policy can be ascertained to deal with these syndicates in Thailand.

**Keyword:** Narcotics, Drug Trafficking, African Drug Syndicate, Courier

### บทคัดย่อ

ปัญหายาเสพติดเป็นปัญหาสำคัญในประเทศไทยมาเป็นเวลานาน ซึ่งรัฐบาลไทยได้มีนโยบายต่าง และใช้งบประมาณเป็นจำนวนมากเพื่อแก้ปัญหายาเสพติดแต่ยังไม่เป็นผลและปัญหายาเสพติดยังคงก่อปัญหาทั้งในด้านสังคมและ เศรษฐกิจแก่ประเทศไทยอย่างต่อเนื่อง สืบเนื่องจากกระแสโลกาภิวัตน์ปัจจุบันการค้ายาเสพติดได้มีการเปลี่ยนแปลงรูปแบบเพื่อให้ยากต่อการตรวจสอบของเจ้าหน้าที่รัฐ โลกาภิวัตน์คือกระบวนการที่ทำให้เกิดความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างประเทศ ประชาชนทั่วโลก ผ่านการรวบรวมของตลาดการค้า การเคลื่อนที่ของแรงงาน และทรัพยากร กระแสโลกาภิวัตน์นำไปสู่การพัฒนาระบบโทรคมนาคม การลดราคาของค่าเดินทาง และค่าขนส่ง ซึ่งเครือข่ายยาเสพติดชาวแอฟริกันได้ใช้ประโยชน์จากเทคโนโลยีการสื่อสารโทรคมนาคมนี้ในการลักลอบลำเลียงยาเสพติดและหลีกเลี่ยงการตรวจสอบของเจ้าหน้าที่รัฐ เครือข่ายยาเสพติดชาวแอฟริกันกลายเป็นปัญหาสำคัญของหน่วยงานบังคับใช้กฎหมายทั่วโลกเนื่องจากจำนวนคดี และจำนวนสมาชิกในเครือข่ายที่เพิ่มมากขึ้นเรื่อยๆรวมไปถึงวิธีดำเนินการค้ายาเสพติดที่มีความซับซ้อน เจ้าหน้าที่บังคับใช้กฎหมายของประเทศไทยเองก็ประสบปัญหาในการป้องกันปราบปรามเครือข่ายยาเสพติดชาวแอฟริกันเนื่องจากปัญหาด้านภาษาและวิธีการลักลอบลำเลียงยาเสพติด บทความนี้จะได้อภิปรายถึงสาเหตุที่เครือข่ายยาเสพติดชาวแอฟริกันเลือกที่จะเข้ามาค้ายาเสพติดในประเทศไทย และรูปแบบการดำเนินการค้ายาเสพติดของเครือข่ายยาเสพติดชาวแอฟริกันที่จะนำไปสู่การนโยบายที่เหมาะสมในการป้องกันปราบปรามเครือข่ายยาเสพติดชาวแอฟริกันต่อไป

**คำสำคัญ:** ยาเสพติด, เครือข่ายยาเสพติดชาวแอฟริกัน, รูปแบบการดำเนินการค้ายาเสพติด, การลักลอบลำเลียงยาเสพติด

## Introduction

Narcotics in Thailand is believed to have existed from the Ayutthaya era until the Rattanakosin era. At present, the narcotics problem is one of the critical problems in Thailand, and is causing social problems, economic problems, and is lowering the quality of life of the people. In 2010, there were 28 tons of “kratom” seized and more than 50 millions “yaba” (methamphetamine tablet) which considered to be 98 per cent of East Asia and Southeast Asia (Wongupparaj, Wongupparaj and Yamchuti, 2015). Every government has come up with various policies in order to deal with the situation and to suppress drugs in Thailand. The Thai government has invested a great amount of money in solving the narcotics problem in Thailand. For example, the Thai government spent from 2002 to 2017 91,819.60 million baht or 5,101.01 million baht per year on dealing with this problem (Piriyangsun, Ongsingh, Proasunthorn, Kowsuwansiri and Charoenpom, 2015). These numbers show the seriousness of the narcotics problem, which is increasing every year.

At present, the narcotics issue has become even more complicated because of social changes and globalization, which have allowed more foreigners to enter Thailand. Globalization is a term that has been used often since the change of the millennium in 2000 and refers to the process in which the world’s population is merging into a single society. This process is influenced by various elements, such as the economy, technology, society, and culture and politics (Croucher, 2004). Globalization affects narcotics in Thailand at many stages, for example in terms of the flow of foreigners both legally and illegally into the kingdom of Thailand, the growth of international transportation, and recent developments in communication systems. Drug traffickers normally use these advanced technologies in order to avoid the detection of law enforcement, which unfortunately works.

African drug syndicates have become a greater problem for Thai society nowadays in terms of the growing number of cases, the number of Thai and Asian women being used and arrested, and in terms of the monetary aspect. According to information from the Royal Thai Police, there were 667 African suspects arrested between 2012 and for narcotics offences, and 565 suspects were Nigerian, or 84.7 percent.

Thai authorities have found difficulties in coping with the African drug syndicates because of the complexity of the methods that the African drug syndicate uses, which are new to most Thai authorities, who normally deal with South East Asian drug traffickers carrying bags containing YABA walking or driving across borders.

## Narcotics Crime

Drug crime is considered by some to be a victimless crime, offenders and victims are willing to engage in illegal activities together to meet their needs. This is different from other crimes, where the victims complain to the police in order to arrest the offenders, and this is the key point for investigating crimes. However, in terms of drug crimes, the offenders and victims together commit the offence; therefore, it can be said that there are no victims (Laosunthorn, 1993).

The characteristics of drug crimes are different from other crimes in various ways. For example, drug crime usually involves politicians or officials of government agencies. Most arresting offenders are only arresting staff members in the drug trafficking organization. Drug crimes and drug trafficking make a great deal of money for offenders, and therefore they can spend money building influence to avoiding arrest.

### The Trend of the Drug Problems Concerning the African Drug Syndicate

Most African offenders in Thailand are Nigerian, where their role in drug trafficking in Thailand began over 20 years ago. In Thailand, Cocaine is sold to foreign travelers at “Soi Nana”, Sukhumvit Road, Bangkok, including Thai addicts, who are rich and have often received an education from overseas, especially from America and Europe. Because Africans live in countries all over the world, there are other types of drug trafficking from sources in some continents where the drugs can be sold in Thailand, such as ICE (crystal methamphetamine) from countries in Africa, heroin from the Golden Crescent (Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan), ice and marijuana from India, and ice from the People's Republic of China. At present, the African drug syndicate has expanded its smuggling to the lower class, as well as to travel areas such as Pattaya, Hua Hin, Samui, and Phuket. Additionally, they use Thailand as a base for smuggling drugs to other countries, for example, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and countries in ASEAN. At present, the Department of Corrections has a lot of African prisoners in jail and most of them have committed drug crimes (Narcotics Suppression Bureau, 2017).

**Table 1:** Statistics on African Prisoners That Committed Drug Crimes in 2016

Nationality	Male	Female	Total
Ghana	25	1	26
Nigeria	336	2	338
Cameroon	2	0	2
Congo	2	0	2
Liberia	1	0	1
Sierra Leone	13	0	13
Guinea	25	1	26
Uganda	0	4	4
Kenya	2	7	9
Rwanda	0	2	2
Zambia	12	0	12
Mozambique	8	2	10
South Africa	8	7	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>460</b>

**Source:** Narcotics Suppression Bureau \*Data: June 21, 2016

**Table 2:** Africans Arrested on Drug Charges in Thailand

Nationalities	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Ghana	6	5	6	3	3	
Guinea Bissao	1					
Guinea	9	5	4	2	1	
Sierra Leone	4	3	3	9	1	
Zambia	6	6		5	2	1

**Table 2:** Africans Arrested on Drug Charges in Thailand

Nationalities	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Nigeria	143	151	113	110	66	49
Mozambique	8	4		2	1	
Uganda	2	2		1	1	
Liberia	1	3	3			
South Africa	4	3	5	4	6	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>53</b>

Source: Polis Database 22 July 2018

### Research Objectives

This study focuses on the following objectives:

- 1 To identify the factors that motivate African drug syndicates to commit transnational drug trafficking in Thailand
- 2 To investigate African drug syndicates' operational patterns
- 3 To recommend the best practices or protocols for Thai authorities to deal with African drug syndicates

### Methodology

The paper on transnational crime in Thailand focuses on the African drug syndicate and is a qualitative, single-case study. The case study method typically is a unique case orientation, where the number of cases or samples is not large. This method provides in-depth and detailed information on all aspects of the issue (Patton, 1990).

This paper aims to answer the following questions: "Why does the African drug syndicate commit crimes in Thailand? What is the operational pattern of the African drug syndicate?" The objectives of the study are as follows.

1. To identify the factors that motivates the African drug syndicate to commit narcotics related crime in Thailand
2. To clarify the African drug syndicate's operational patterns
3. To recommend policy for solving the problem African drug syndicates in Thailand

The paper will focus on the causes of transnational crime in Thailand, focusing on the case of African drug syndicate, using the methods above.

Furthermore, this paper will collect information on the causes of the African drug syndicate problem in Thailand using documentary research and in-depth interviews, including interviewees in two major categories, those in law enforcement and Nigerian inmates. The law enforcement agencies have also been divided into local and international agencies, yet the authorities selected to participate in the interviews are agencies that primarily deal with African drug traffickers. The Nigerian inmates that participated in this paper were inmates that were

imprisoned for possessing and selling drugs. All of the inmates were arrested in Thailand and are imprisoned in the Central Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts.

The total number of interviewee includes two agents from each agency or ten agents in total. All of the agents and officers have had more than eight years of experience working on the suppression of African drug syndicates both in Thailand and internationally. Most of the agents and officers that participated in the interviews were at the executive and management level with experience at both the practical and managerial level. The profile and experience of the interviewees increased the paper's defend ability. All of the interviews took place during the middle of 2018.

Narcotics problem is one of the most serious problems in Thailand which every government put enormous budget to solve the issue. Numbers of policies has been adopted in order to cope with drugs situation in Thailand. However, the problem still exists and cause massive problems to Thai society such as health issue, economics problem and other crimes. Unfortunately, narcotics problem getting even more complicated than before due to the social change which resulted from "globalization". Globalization is the process of relationship between countries and people in the world with combining markets, production and resource all over the world by utilizing through the international trading system, moving labor and international fund. Globalization leads to the reduction of transportation cost, advance telecommunication system and shift in labor; which shapes local crime into transnational crime. African drug syndicates usually use advance telecommunication technology to commit transnational drug trafficking to avoid detection of the authorities, which regrettably works. African drug syndicates have become greater problem to law enforcement around the world, as the rising number of cases, the number of members around the globe and the sophisticated operational patterns. Thai authorities also found difficulties in suppression African drug syndicates because of language barrier and methods they use in smuggling drugs. This paper discusses why the African drug syndicate has chosen to operate in Thailand and what this syndicate's operational patterns are so that proper policy can be ascertained to deal with these syndicates in Thailand.

## Findings

This paper divided the results into three topics according to the paper questions, which were the reasons behind Africans committing drug trafficking in Thailand, African drug syndicate operational patterns, and a summary for appropriate policy to cope with this issue.

### Factors Causing Africans to Engage in Drug Trafficking in Thailand

The paper found that in Africa, there are a multitude of social and economic problems; in some countries, there is civil war, which causes poverty. People in Africa want to migrate for better life. There is a lot of information on the Internet or from friends that have already moved abroad so Africans that want to migrate can ask for information. Hence, Africans use advances telecommunication technology to gather information about where to migrate to, and Thailand is one of the best choices due to its economy readiness and the lower cost of living compared to other countries with similar infrastructures. Furthermore, Thailand has an environment that can be called a "criminal-friendly one." According to one DEA agent, "Thailand has proper environment for

criminal to live which is not particularly only for African Drug Syndicate, but also including other criminal groups too.” Thailand has a policy of welcoming tourists and the generosity of Thai people welcome foreigners. Additionally, it is easier to enter and disappear in Thailand compared to developed countries in the region, such as Singapore. Furthermore, comparing Thailand to neighbor countries such as Myanmar, Cambodia or Laos, Thailand may have slightly higher costs of living but greater infrastructure than those countries. Hence, most Africans decide to migrate to Thailand than other countries in South East Asia.

Once Africans migrate to Thailand, some may have thought about engaging in the drug trade at first, but mostly they aim to do business and look for a better life. However, when things do not go according to plan, and they cannot get a job or their business collapses, they turn to friends or families member in the African community, asking for advice and they obtain information about drug trafficking. Then the Africans that cannot get a regular job will turn to the drug trade as the drug trade can provide them with more money and more quickly than with a normal job. In addition, law and law enforcement do not affect Africans decisions to commit drug trafficking because criminals do not think that they are going to get caught. According to Thai law enforcement, “criminals do not concern about the law as they think they never going to get arrested”.

### **African Drug Syndicate Operational Pattern**

The first issue to be discussed regarding the operational pattern of African drug syndicates is their procedure for retaining their status in Thailand. This topic is very important as most Africans that are arrested in Thailand did not have proper visas. The Department of Consular Affairs in Thailand has classified several types of visas or visa applications. However, it can be concluded that Africans are more likely to live in Thailand using a tourist visa, which will allow them to stay 60 days in the first phase. The African drug syndicate exhibits the following patterns for maintaining status of its members:

1 The Non-B visa is a business or employment transaction where African drug syndicate members are registered, or apply for jobs, such as language teachers, athletes, especially footballers, which are commonly found at present.

2 The Non-Ed visa is a visa for education. The African drug syndicate members will be enrolled in private higher education institutions, or a private university. They will be enrolled as students continuously for years, and in some cases the students in an undergraduate program will enroll until the age of 45 or over.

3 Non-O visas are very common among African people that apply for marriage registration with Thai women or for a birth certificate in Thailand. African drug syndicate members usually have Thai girlfriends and get married, and here the African drug syndicate gains a number of advantages from the marriage, such the advantage of obtaining visas and also using Thai women as nominees for financial transactions and in some cases as drug couriers.

These three types of visas enable Africans to legally remain in Thailand for up to 90 days and can be extended for up to one year (Consular, 2018).

### **African Drug Syndicate Organizational Structure**

The African drug syndicate organizational structure is more of a network of relationships among small groups with different expertise or functions. It is a grouping of Africans that have the same domicile, speak the same dialect, and have a high trust level in each other. The trust level can be referred by other people if they have the same

residence. If they do not know each other but come from the same domicile, they will contact the families of both parties in Africa to meet together in order to build confidence for both parties. As trust cannot be found easily in illegal organizations, organized crime tends to operate within its social ties (Kleemans, 2014). In the illegal world, there are no laws or regulations and therefore operating in these circumstances demands people that can be trusted. The organization structure of African drug syndicates is a network that allows fast communication, flat line decision-making, and quickly adapted plans. The syndicate can change its pattern of action in a timely manner if it is found that at any stage there is a risk of being arrested by the authorities.

### **Trafficking Method**

The paper found that the African drug syndicate has many patterns of drug trafficking, for example, smuggling drugs through international airports in various regions throughout Thailand, including the smuggling of cocaine from South America, ICE from the Golden Crescent, and Hashish from India. Furthermore, the African drug syndicate often uses couriers or parcel delivery to smuggle drugs to Thailand.

### **Couriers**

African drug syndicates most commonly use Thai women as couriers. There are also Asian women such as Philippine, Indonesian, Vietnamese, and Africans that are hired or used as couriers to smuggle drugs to Thailand. African drug syndicates usually smuggle drugs through the international airport in Bangkok and regions such as Don Mueang Airport, Phuket Airport, Krabi Airport, etc., or through various immigration check points at the borders throughout the country, such as the Nongkhai checkpoint that connects with Lao DPR. Furthermore, drug couriers are instructed to use different methods depending on the African boss and these vary with the situation at that particular point in time. The point is to do whatever it takes to not get caught, for example using Thai or other Asian woman as couriers.

### **Drug Post and Parcel**

The postal and parcel drug delivery method has become increasingly common in the last 5-6 years, as globalization has led to the growth of online markets. This has led to the development of international transport that is lower in cost, and is faster and more convenient. At present, there are several international shipping companies that the African drug syndicate often uses to traffic its drugs. In addition, the African drug syndicate has changed its delivery patterns to avoid being arrested by using Thai women's names as recipients and using Thai women to pick up the parcels. According to senior Australian law enforcement agents, the African drug syndicate in Australia rents a house in a neighborhood and keeps quiet in the house until the parcel is delivered to an empty house near their house.

### **Drug Types and Sources**

Information from the UNODC (2012) indicates that South Asian countries are a cocaine transit point before sending it to countries such as Singapore, India, and Australia, which are new cocaine markets. Nevertheless, the African drug syndicate imports cocaine from South America to sell to foreigners that travel to Bangkok. In addition, the African drug syndicate has expanded its market into the retail ICE market, which usually sells to tourists.

As the drug market of the African drug syndicate has expanded into the trade of ICE and other drugs, it has tended to import heroin and ice from the Golden Crescent region (Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan), ice and marijuana from India, and ice from the People's Republic of China (NSB, 2017).

### **Financial Routes**

The African drug syndicate uses international financial services to transfer drugs and for expenses such as food and accommodations for couriers. These drug traffickers use Western Union services because of their ease of use and because of little investigation into that organization. In addition, the African drug network's financial transactions often use the name of a Thai woman as a transactional nominee in order to avoid inspection or the authorities.

### **Drug Trafficking Model**

Although the African drug syndicates' smuggling method has changed over time, the drug trafficking patterns of these syndicates have remained essentially the same and can be broken down into the following: the importation of drugs into Thailand, selling drugs in Thailand, and sending drugs out of Thailand to a third country.

The findings suggest that the drug trafficking patterns of the African drug syndicate include two groups; first is the group that only imports drugs to Thailand and sells to other groups for export or distribution in the country; the second group does all the processes and imports the drugs and then sells them in Thailand or exports them to a third country. The drug trade of the African drug syndicate will focus on small quantities of drugs to lessen the risk if they got caught.

### **Recommendations**

There are a few possible policies for solving the African drug syndicate problem at the early stage before it grows greater as follows.

- 1) Enhance cooperation among both international and local agencies

- 2) Cooperation between agencies should not only take place on the executive level, but relationships should be encouraged at the practitioner level so that practitioners can coordinate with the law enforcement authorities of different countries in a timely manner. Furthermore, the development of cooperation in the judicial process in ASEAN countries is very important because African drug syndicates change their patterns of smuggling and transporting drugs, and the pathways that they use, all the time. There are times when the route changes to neighboring countries before smuggling drugs into Thailand through the border.

Moreover, every agency involved in the prevention and suppression of African drug syndicates must cooperate in a more concrete way. There should be a way to communicate between departments to speed up the synchronization. For example, when the Thai embassy in Abuja received a Nigerian visa application and was able to send the application to police officers in the Narcotics Suppression Bureau or Officers from the Office of Narcotics Control Board, or immigration office for quickly checking whether the person has a criminal record.

- 3) Improve immigration control

The study indicated that African drug syndicate members usually enter Thailand with a tourist visa and apply for other types of visas, and in order to apply for other visas, Africans use various tricky methods such as false marrying,



enrolling in university courses, and registering a ghost company. After obtaining a visa, they are able to commit drug trafficking more easily. Hence, the government should have a policy to control this issue and reduce the chances of undesired Africans and individuals of other nationalities being illegally in Thailand and committing crimes.

The reduction of opportunities or factors that could lead to crimes in the case of transnational crime is to reduce the chances of illegally living in Thailand with fraudulent intent. Reducing this opportunity can be done by reducing the chance of remaining in Thailand illegally, and here relevant agencies must actively participate in monitoring the status of foreigners. For example the Ministry of Education must closely monitor foreigners staying in Thailand using a student visa, and the Ministry of Commerce must strongly control companies that have foreigners from nationalities in watch list as stakeholder or employees and must check the location of the company because in many cases, the police found that a company building registered to or involved with a African drug syndicate was abandoned. Next, reduce the chances of illegally entering the country. Many Africans have been arrested and sent back to their home country but have returned to Thailand because the monitoring system is vulnerable. Therefore, identity verification technology is necessary.

#### 4) Creating immunity

Creating immunity is a policy aim to reduce the number of potential drug addicts. Creating immunity can be done by knowledge building or through education. The writer believes that it is important to develop the educational system at the youth level so that all people are knowledgeable about punishment for using drugs and the harmful effects of drugs and some foreigners that are criminals. The development of education can be done in conjunction with the provision of knowledge programs, such as the D.A.R.E. Project, by increasing the knowledge of the pattern that some groups of foreigners use to lure Thai people. In order for the public to be aware of the threat and to cooperate with the state, the government should create an information-sharing channel with the public.

#### 5) Supply and Demand Reduction

This strategy basically suppresses and eliminates drug networks and organizations including producers, traffickers, and everyone involved in the network. The suppression must emphasize investigation of financial routes and seize property of the drug syndicate, as the main goal of a drug organization is economic. Furthermore, enforcement of laws will have a psychological effect on criminals so that they will be afraid of committing crimes.

Demand reduction refers to the treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers and addicts in order to decrease drug demand in all aspects and to facilitate their reintegration into their communities with dignity, as well as to prevent their return to addiction by creating an anti-drug environment. Under this strategy, drug abusers and addicts are considered to be "patients" that should be provided with appropriate treatment and rehabilitation.

Furthermore, in terms of the operational level, the paper adopted a situational crime prevention concept to suggest practices that fit the situation. The core concept of situational crime prevention theory is that crime can be prevented by increasing the risks, reducing opportunities, lowering rewards, reducing provocations and removing excuses (Cornish, Clarke, 2003).

**Table 3:** Applying Situational Crime Prevention to the African Drug Syndicate

<b>Technique</b>				
<b>Increase effort</b>	<b>Increase risk</b>	<b>Reduce reward</b>	<b>Reduce provocation</b>	<b>Remove excuse</b>
<b>Installing biometric at border immigration point</b>	<b>Randomly check people who travel from risky drug source countries</b>	<b>property seize all participants involve in narcotics case</b>	<b>campaign about threat of foreigners</b>	<b>Accommodation owner must inform authority according to the law</b>
<b>Enhance cooperation among law enforcement agencies</b>	<b>Randomly check parcel from risky countries</b>			
<b>Raid at African community more often</b>	<b>At check point, more strictly check possible courier such as one lady who cannot speak</b>			
<b>Raid on suspicious language school</b>	<b>Recruiting informants who can speak local dialect</b>			
<b>Check company that does not have any movement</b>				

The table above is a list of situational crime prevention techniques used to fight African drug syndicates. The first column indicates techniques for reducing opportunities for African drug syndicates, comprising the instillation of biometric checking systems at border immigration points, enhancing cooperation among law enforcement agencies, raiding African communities more often, raiding suspicious language school to prevent illegal visa applications, and checking company that do not demonstrate any transaction in order to prevent illegal visa applications.

The second column demonstrates the practices for increasing the risks to African drug syndicate operations. First is randomly checking people that travel from watch list drug source countries. Next is to randomly check parcels from risky countries. At the check point, possible couriers should be more strictly checked, such as one lady who cannot speak English travel to Brazil for a month. Lastly, informants should be recruited that can speak the local dialect in order to obtain intelligence and to do “buy bust” operations.

Next is to reduce the rewards for the drug syndicate by conducting financial investigations and seizing all suspicious property. The fourth column is to reduce the provocation of handlers, in this case, Thai women that are used as couriers, by promoting the threat of Africans that use women as couriers and how couriers end up in overseas prison or worse, executed. The last column involves the manager or owner of the accommodation accepting foreigners; especially Africans staying, needs to inform local authority.

## Conclusion

African drug syndicates have become a major treat for law enforcement agencies around the globe due to their new sophisticated operational patterns and language barrier that make it difficult for the authorities to obtain intelligence. In Thailand, African drug syndicates have been involved in drug trafficking for years and had developed operational patterns over time to avoid the authorities. In recent years, the number of drug cases related to African drug syndicates and the number of Thai and Asian women arrested as courier has risen noticeably.

The paper collected data from experienced interviewees and relevant document and can be summarized that African drug syndicates chose to commit transnational drug trafficking in Thailand because of several reasons but the major reason was financial factor. At the beginning, Africans migrate to Thailand for better life, job opportunity; yet when they things do not go according to plan, they will consult the Africans in their community, for example in the church, which can influence their decision to join a drug syndicate. Furthermore, the paper suggests that African drug syndicates usually involve in trafficking cocaine from South America and ICE from the Golden Crescent and Africa to Thailand by using either courier or postal parcels. After drug arrived in Thailand, African drug syndicates may sell them to other drug organization or export to third country which gives them enormous profit.

The possible solutions are to strengthen the capability of law enforcement agencies, for example installing biometric system at the immigration to reduce opportunity of African drug syndicate committing crime in Thailand. Furthermore, an increase in the operational risks for African drug syndicate members should be done by, for example, enhancing the level of checking people traveling from watch list countries.

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