



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
JULY 16, 2008

CONTACT: CHARLES F. MILLER
(202) 532-4037

NATIONAL DRUG INTELLIGENCE CENTER (NDIC) RELEASES **THE INDIAN COUNTRY DRUG THREAT ASSESSMENT 2008**

Johnstown, PA - The National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC), a component of the United States Department of Justice and the nation's principal center for domestic strategic counter drug analysis, announced the publication of the *Indian Country Drug Threat Assessment 2008*. The report is a comprehensive, strategic assessment of the threat posed to Native American communities by drug trafficking organizations, criminal groups, and gangs and the illicit drugs they distribute on reservations throughout the United States. The report examines the operations, capabilities, and vulnerabilities of drug traffickers who exploit Indian Country and the difficulties faced by federal, state, and tribal law enforcement officials in combating drug trafficking in Native American communities.

NDIC prepared the assessment at the request of the Law Enforcement Task Force of the Indian Affairs Executive Working Group of the White House Domestic Policy Council. The report provides policymakers; federal, state, and tribal law enforcement officials; and resource planners with strategic intelligence regarding drug trafficking and abuse in Indian Country.

Key Findings of the report are:

- The illicit drug threat to Indian Country varies geographically across Native American communities. Overall, marijuana is the most widely available illicit drug on reservations. Ice methamphetamine, powder and crack cocaine, diverted pharmaceuticals, heroin, and MDMA also are available and abused at various levels on reservations throughout the United States.
- Most illicit drugs available throughout Indian Country are transported to reservations by Native American criminal groups and independent dealers who travel to nearby cities to purchase illicit drugs, primarily from Mexican DTOs and criminal groups, for distribution in their home communities.
- Mexican DTOs are the principal wholesale suppliers and producers of illicit drugs available to reservations throughout Indian Country and pose the greatest organizational threat to Native American communities across the United States. Mexican DTOs typically supply Native American traffickers with illicit drugs for distribution on their reservations. Mexican DTOs also smuggle significant quantities of marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamine, and heroin from Mexico into the United States through reservations that border Mexico.

- Canada-based Asian DTOs also pose an organizational threat to Indian Country, particularly to reservations near the U.S.-Canada border. These traffickers smuggle high-potency Canadian marijuana and MDMA through northern reservations along or near the U.S.-Canada border.
- Native American DTOs and criminal groups are the principal retail-level distributors of illicit drugs on reservations. African American and Caucasian criminal groups and independent dealers also engage in varying levels of drug distribution throughout Indian Country.
- National and local street gangs are increasingly distributing retail-level quantities of illicit drugs on reservations; they also are committing a host of gang-related criminal activities in Native American communities to facilitate their distribution operations, including intimidation, assault, and burglary.
- Drug production in Indian Country is limited; however, Mexican DTOs are suspected of producing significant quantities of marijuana from cannabis cultivated at outdoor grow sites in remote locations on many reservations, particularly those in the Pacific Region. Additionally, African American criminal groups convert powder cocaine to crack cocaine on some reservations.
- Native American substance abuse levels are higher than those for any other demographic group. American Indians and Alaska Natives are more likely than any other racial group to report past year drug abuse, according to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH).
- The diversion of pharmaceutical drugs is an increasing concern of law enforcement on some reservations in Indian Country.
- The widespread availability and abuse of illicit drugs coupled with the formidable smuggling, transportation, and distribution operations of multiple criminal groups and gangs operating in Indian Country contribute to a wide range of violent and property crime. Drug traffickers generally engage in violent and property crimes to facilitate their drug trafficking operations. Native American abusers typically commit property crimes to support their addiction.

The report focuses on Native American reservations in the contiguous 48 states of the United States. In order to assess the current drug situation in Indian Country, NDIC intelligence analysts visited 80 reservations throughout the country. In addition, NDIC conducted interviews with federal, state, and tribal law enforcement officials and analyzed federal, state, and tribal law enforcement reporting; intelligence community reporting; open-source reporting; and data provided by numerous agencies, including the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Safe Trails Task Forces (STTFs), and Indian Health Service (IHS).

A copy of the assessment *Indian Country Drug Threat Assessment 2008* can be found at: <http://www.usdoj.gov/ndic/pubs28/29239/index.htm>

#

DO NOT REPLY TO THIS MESSAGE. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, PLEASE USE THE CONTACTS IN THE MESSAGE OR CALL THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AT 202-514-2007.