

I .TRENDS IN ILLICIT DRUGS SMUGGLING

1. Summary

The total number of seizures of illicit drugs^{*1} was 1,896 (4.9 times year on year) (highest number on record). And the seized quantity^{*2} was approximately 519 kg^{*3} (down 18% YOY). With total seizures of over 500 kg for five years in a row, the situation is still serious. Five firearms smuggling crimes were discovered (up 67% YOY), and the seized quantity was five firearms (up 25% YOY).

^{*1} Methamphetamine, cannabis, opium, narcotics (cocaine, heroin, MDMA, etc.) and psychotropic substances.

^{*2} This excludes drugs in tablet form.

^{*3} This is equivalent to approximately 18.85 million doses in the quantities commonly used by drug abusers.

[Designated substance crimes]

Designated substance^{*4} (so called dangerous drug) was added to the Article Prohibited from Importation under the Customs Law in April 2015. The number of seizures of designated substances was 1,462, which accounted for about 80% of all illicit drug seizures. And the seized quantity was approximately 37 kg.

^{*4}Substances designated by the Minister of Health, Labor and Welfare as the substances that have a high tendency to cause excitement, depression, and hallucinations to the central nervous system and can be hazardous to the public health and hygiene when they are taken in one's body (Section 15, Article 2, of the Pharmaceutical and Medical Device Act)

[Methamphetamine crimes]

The number of seizures was 83 (down 52% YOY), and the seized quantity was approximately 422 kg (down 23% YOY). Both of these decreased.

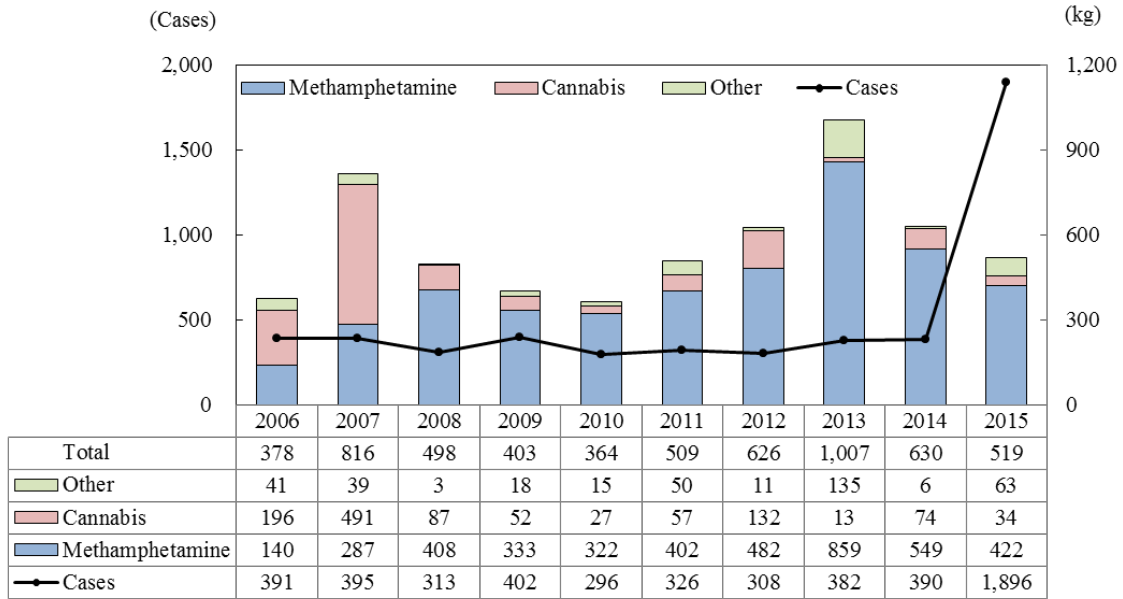
[Cannabis crimes]

The number of seizures was 122 (up 23% YOY), and the seized quantity was approximately 34 kg (down 55% YOY).

[Narcotics crimes]

The number of seizures was 213 (about 2.3 times YOY) (highest number on record), and the seized quantity was approximately 26 kg (about 4 times YOY). Both of these increased.

Transition in the number of seizures and the seized quantity of illicit drugs



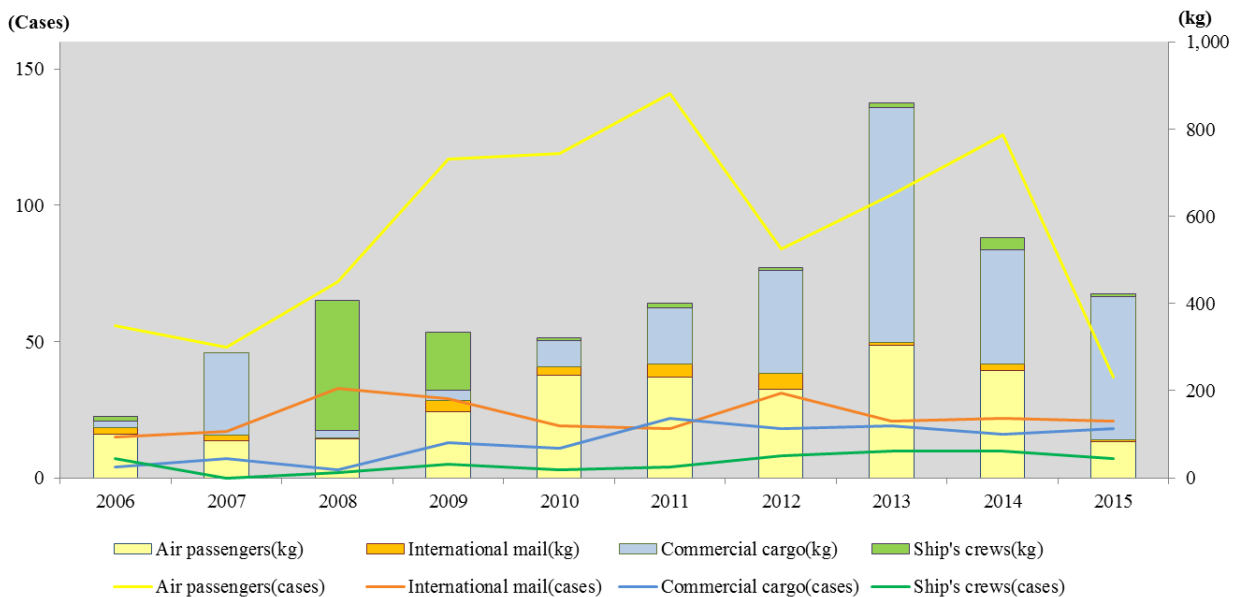
2. Trends in Illicit Drugs Smuggling

(1) Methamphetamine

The number of seizures of methamphetamine in 2015 was 83(down 52% YOY). The seized quantity was approximately 422 kg (down 23% YOY) and both of these decreased.

When looking at the situation by mode of transport, while there was an increase in the number of seizures and the seized quantity of methamphetamine concealed in commercial cargoes as compared to previous year (18 cases (up 13% YOY), 328 kg (up 26% YOY), respectively), the number of seizures and the seized quantity of smuggled drugs by other mode both decreased. As for the smuggling by air passengers, the number of seized cases decreased to 37 (down 71% YOY), and the seized quantity was approximately 84 kg (down 66% YOY), which was the lowest record in the past ten years [refer to Figure 1].

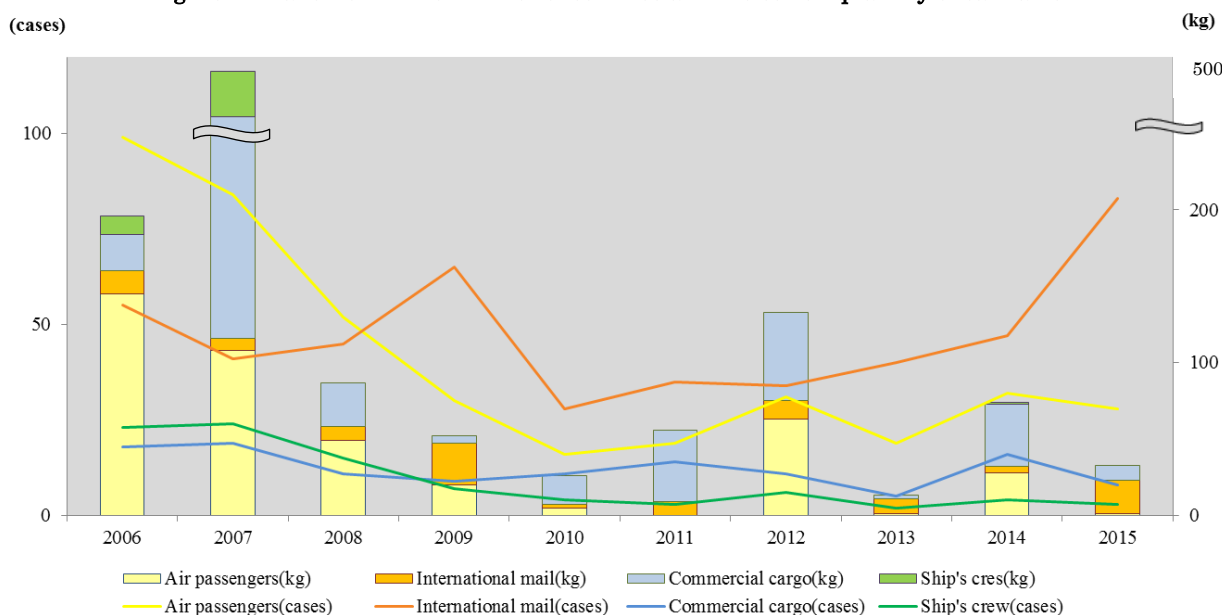
Figure 1: Transition in the number of seizures and the seized quantity of methamphetamine



(2) Cannabis

While the number of seizures of cannabis in 2015 increased continuously from the previous year to 122 (up 23% YOY), the seized quantity was halved to approximately 34 kg (down 55% YOY). The average seized quantity per one case was approximately 275 g (down 63% YOY). There is a tendency toward the downsizing of smuggling. When looking by mode of transport, the number of seizures using the international mail service was 83, which was the highest record in the past ten years [refer to Figure 2].

Figure 2: Transition in the number of seizures and the seized quantity of cannabis



(3) Narcotics

The number of seizures of narcotics in 2015 was 213 (about 2.3 times YOY), which was the highest record in the past. When looking by types of narcotics, the most smuggled narcotics were those sold as aphrodisiacs or energy enhancement on illegal websites, which are so called GHB, and 73 cases of GHB smuggling were seized. The seized quantity increased to approximately 26 kg (about four times YOY).

(4) Designated substances

As part of the emergency plan for eradication of dangerous drug abuse (drawn-up on July 18, 2014), designated substances were added to the “Articles prohibited from importation” under the Customs Law in April 2015.

The number of seizures of designated substances in 2015 was 1,462, which accounted for about 80% of the total number of seizures of all the illicit drugs. The seized quantity was approximately 37 kg.

The number of seizures per month was around 200 and remained high level until August; however, it turned to a decreasing trend from September and became less than half of the figure in the peak month [refer to Figure 3].

In terms of types of substances, the number of seizures of isobutyl nitrite was 1,285, which accounted for about 90% of the number of seizures of all designated substances [refer to Figure 4].

Many of the isobutyl nitrite are liquid type and sold in a small bottle (about 9 ml) with the name “RUSH” or others on illegal websites. This is used by inhaling the evaporated substance.

The seized quantity per one case was three to four small bottles on average; however, 72 bottles were seized in one case.

As for mode of transport, the number of seizures using the international mail service was 1,442, which accounted for 99% of the number of seizures of all designated substances [refer to Figure 5].

When looking by source of smuggling, the number of seizures from China was 1,130, which accounted for about 80% of the number of seizures of all designated substances [refer to Figure 6].

Figure 3: The number of seizures of designated substances per month

(Cases)

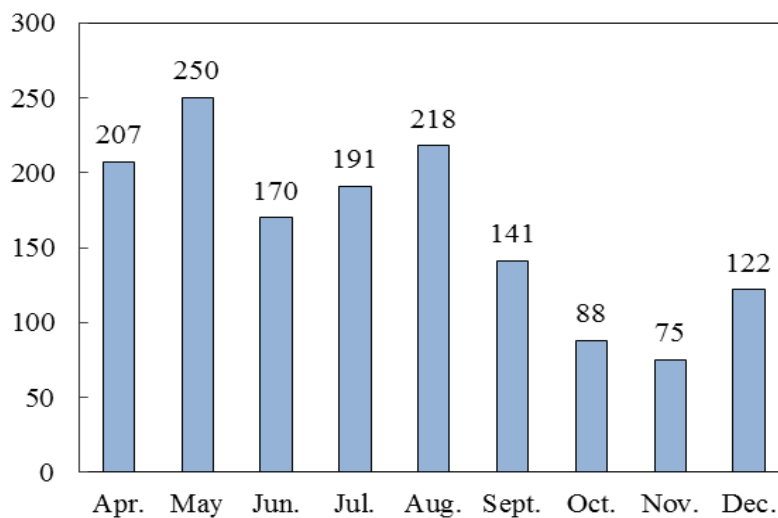


Figure 4: The number of seizures by substance type

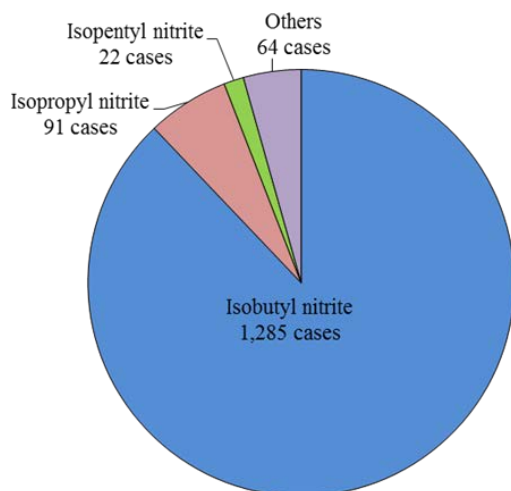


Figure 5: The number of seizures by mode of transport

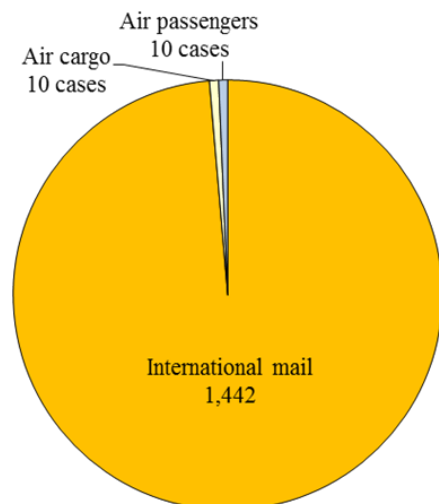
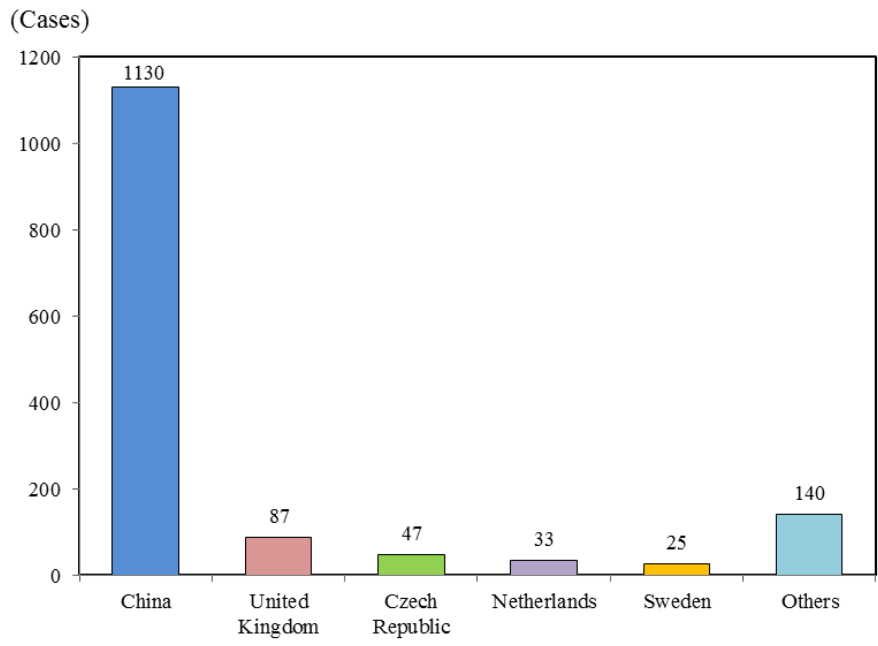


Figure 6: The number of seizures of designated substances by source



*China includes Hong-Kong

3. Trends in Firearms Smuggling

The number of seizures of firearms in 2015 was five (up 67%, YOY), and the seized quantity was five (up 25%, YOY). Both of these increased. The seized firearms were all guns.