

# Countries not adequately addressing illegal drug use: experts

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A new expert report Monday showed that many countries around the world are failing to adequately address illegal drug use, in the first evaluation of its kind.

The Global Drug Policy Index report used recommendations set out by the United Nations to see how national drug policies measured up in terms of health, development and human rights outcomes.

It scored 30 countries in categories like extreme enforcement, criminal justice response and access to controlled medicines.

It found that most national drug laws have punishing effects, from driving [police violence](#) and rights violations to preventing [drug users](#) from getting adequate health services.

Norway, with [high scores](#) for measured police response and good health care coverage, topped the list but still only scored 74 out of a possible 100 points.

The median score among all nations was just 48.

"Scoring 100 only means that you're implementing what the UN system recognises as the minimum," said Matt Wall of Swansea University who helped develop the report's evaluation methods.

"The fact that no country approaches that at all really paints a bleak

picture," he told reporters ahead of the launch.

Brazil ranked lowest on the list, and was among four countries that scored below 50 for enforcement due to their use of extreme and rights-violating measures.

Portugal in third place has treated illegal substance use as a public health issue since it decriminalised all drugs in 2001 and scored points for providing responses outside the criminal justice system.

The report was compiled by the Harm Reduction Consortium and the International Drug Policy Consortium with input from experts on the ground in each country.

It hopes to provide an accountability tool for drug policies that goes beyond traditional effectiveness measures limited to tallying arrests and drug seizures.

Experts chose 30 representative countries to evaluate based on relevance of [policy](#), availability of data and presence of civil society actors.

Neither the Philippines nor the United States, both which have faced scrutiny for their tough [drug](#) policies, were included on the list.

Resources for the project was limited, but the consortium is seeking more funding with the goal of issuing out a new index every two years and hopes to add more countries in the future.

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