

Contemporary Criminal Policy for the Prevention of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances in Algerian Law

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ABSTRACT:

The study examines amendments to Algeria's anti-narcotics laws (25-03 and 23-05) that strengthen institutional prevention. It highlights a dual approach combining therapeutic justice for users with stricter deterrence against trafficking, alongside measures such as mandatory screening, digitized prescriptions, and enhanced investigative tools. The study concludes that effectiveness depends on proper implementation, improved healthcare infrastructure, and specialized training for judges and investigators.

key words: Law 25-03; Hard Drugs; Therapeutic Justice; Psychotropic Substances; Smart Prevention.

Introduction:

Organized crime, in its various types and forms, has become one of the greatest challenges and threats to state security. Drug trafficking has also emerged as one of the most appalling forms of this transnational organized criminality. Given its geographical location, Algeria is no longer immune to the dangers and challenges generated by this scourge. The phenomenon of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances has penetrated the deepest layers of the social fabric, moving beyond the conventional image of traditional drugs to assume the form of colored pharmaceutical tablets invading schools and quiet neighborhoods. Crime here is no longer merely a matter of an outlaw carrying a weapon in a dark street. Rather, it has evolved into complex networks managed by minds that employ technology and intelligence, exploiting the weaknesses in the state's legal "immune wall." Faced with this tide threatening to overwhelm society, its security, and its stability through the targeting of young people, the Algerian legislature found itself confronted with a historic

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necessity: either to remain attached to a rusted classical legal arsenal that had failed to keep pace with the new "merchants of death," or to overturn the table and redefine the rules of engagement.¹

Out of this urgent need emerged Law No. 25-03 of 13 July 2025,² not as a mere minor amendment to previous texts, but as a document proclaiming an intelligent war: a war that relies not only on "handcuffs and prisons," but also extends to prevention, compulsory treatment, functional safeguards, financial incentives for informants, and other means. The transition from the logic of blind repression that prevailed in earlier laws to one of intelligent prevention and technological deterrence constitutes a radical transformation in the national penal doctrine, undoubtedly shaped by global developments that no longer regard the addict merely as a criminal, but as a victim in need of rescue, while viewing the promoter and trafficker as a terrorist who assassinates minds.³

A close examination of this subject is not an academic luxury, but rather a dissection of a living legal body through which we seek to understand how the state may stay one step ahead of the criminal. The significance here lies not in merely listing legal provisions, but in taking the pulse of these texts. Are they truly capable of withstanding the continuing force of "criminal innovation"? Has the legislature succeeded in balancing the "surgeon's scalpel" that treats the addict with the "sword of justice" that cuts off the trafficker at the source? In this research journey, we shall employ the scalpel of the analytical method to dissect the texts and uncover what lies beneath the lines, drawing also on the comparative method to examine how established legal systems, such as the French system, have confronted similar dilemmas, and whether the national legislature has benefited from those lessons or merely repeated the same errors.

These legitimate questions lead us to articulate the central problem that constitutes the foundation of this study: to what extent has the Algerian legislator, through the mechanisms introduced in Laws 25-03 and 23-05, succeeded in formulating a balanced equation between the therapeutic containment of the victim-addict and the stringent digital and field-based suppression of organized criminal networks?

To address this question, we will not resort to conventional structural divisions; rather, we will proceed along two parallel and complementary trajectories. First, we

1- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), World Drug Report 2023, United Nations Publication, Vienna, 2023, p. 15.

2- Ordinary Law No. 25-03, dated 5 Muharram 1447 corresponding to 13 July 2025, amending and supplementing Law No. 04-18, Official Gazette No. 43, p. 3.

3- Ordinary Law No. 23-05, dated 7 May 2023, amending and supplementing Law No. 04-18 relating to the prevention of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and the suppression of their illicit use and trafficking, Official Gazette of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, No. 32.

will explore the human and preventive dimension of the law (Section One), where the state assumes the role of both physician and intelligent regulator, protecting youth from deviance. We will then move to examine the deterrent and investigative framework (Section Two), to assess how the law has asserted its coercive authority against those who seek to undermine public health security, with particular emphasis on the most critical procedural tools placed at the disposal of the judiciary.¹

THE FIRST TOPIC: THE PREVENTIVE AND THERAPEUTIC APPROACH

The law is no longer merely a whip that lashes the offender's back; within modern penal philosophy, it has evolved into a surgical instrument that seeks to excise the pathology without destroying the body. This vision resonates deeply within recent legislative developments, which no longer regard the addict simply as a criminal to be isolated, but as a patient in need of rescue. The new legislation, through its strategic turn toward digitalization as a regulatory mechanism, transcends classical methods of supervision and establishes what may be termed "smart prevention." A close reading of Law 23-05 reveals the legislator's intent to close the backdoor channels through which psychotropic substances have historically leaked from legitimate circuits such as pharmacies and hospitals into the black market. This marks a fundamental shift that relocates the battleground from the street to administrative records.

First Requirement: Preventive Measures as a Containment of Deviance

Perhaps the most serious challenge confronting contemporary drug control is not the traditional "baron" operating in the shadows, but rather the subtle diversion of pharmaceutical products from therapeutic pathways into addictive trajectories, infiltrating state institutions and schools. In response, the legislator has introduced stringent monitoring mechanisms that position pharmacists and physicians on the front line of defense. The medical prescription is no longer a mere document susceptible to forgery through simple duplication; it has become an electronic record subject to strict oversight through the "national index" and triplicate prescription systems. This measure is not simply an administrative formality, but an effort to disrupt the cycle of "doctor shopping," whereby addicts move from one practitioner to another in order to accumulate commercial quantities of psychotropic substances.

Digitalization in this context should not be understood merely as a technical upgrade, but as a politico-criminal strategy aimed at reengineering the relationships among actors within the healthcare system. The information system enables real-time data integration, facilitating the detection of unjustified repetition in the dispensing of sensitive medications. It also allows health authorities to monitor anomalous consumption patterns across geographic and temporal dimensions. In this way, each prescription is transformed into a traceable digital footprint, thereby narrowing the

1- Raymond Gassin, *Criminologie*, 7th ed., Dalloz, Paris, 2011, p. 542.

margin of maneuver that certain networks previously exploited under the cover of medical legitimacy.

Under the recently enacted provisions, the pharmacist is no longer merely a dispenser of medication; rather, his legal responsibility has expanded to include the duty to report any suspicious prescription under penalty of accountability.¹ Failure to report is no longer interpreted as professional neutrality but may instead be characterized as serious negligence or negative complicity in the deviation of the therapeutic process. The legislator has thus imposed a form of positive obligation upon professionals, whereby the protection of public health takes precedence over commercial considerations or professional courtesies.

A review of comparative experiences reveals that the French legislator pioneered this approach through the Dossier Médical Partagé system, which enables centralized and secure monitoring of a patient's medication pathway. The national legislator is attempting to emulate this model in order to regulate the disorder associated with psychotropic substances that has spread through residential neighborhoods under the guise of psychological calming.² The shared medical record is intended not only to improve the quality of treatment but also to serve as a preventive tool for detecting misuse and deviation from therapeutic objectives.

These measures aim to create a firewall preventing medicine from becoming a source of harm and to make it technically possible to track the trajectory of a single pill from the manufacturer to the patient's mouth, thereby constraining networks that rely on professional collusion or administrative loopholes. They also establish a new culture of accountability within the healthcare sector based on transparency and traceability, such that every therapeutic intervention becomes subject to review and scrutiny.

However, this transformation raises issues relating to the protection of personal data and medical confidentiality, since expanding access to health information requires strict safeguards to prevent misuse. The success of this system therefore depends on achieving a delicate balance between effective oversight and respect for patient privacy.

In sum, digitalization and pharmaceutical responsibility constitute two pillars in a strategy to contain legitimate deviation, namely the slippage that begins with a lawful prescription and ends in destructive addiction. It is an attempt to close the back door to crime, where the trafficker enters not with a weapon but with a stamped prescription, and the substance is not smuggled in a truck but dispensed in a box of medication bearing a legitimate medical designation.

1- Article 5 bis 5, Ordinary Law No. 23-05, dated 7 May 2023, amending and supplementing Law No. 04-18, Official Gazette of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, No. 32.

2- Michel Setbon, *L'injection de drogues : Santé publique et pratiques sociales*, Éditions de la Santé, Paris, 2021, p. 89.

Law 25-03 also introduced a transformative mechanism in the form of anticipatory analysis. Article 5 bis 9 explicitly requires medical tests confirming the absence of drug use as a fundamental condition for employment in public administrations, public institutions, and positions of responsibility.¹ This measure shifts the battle toward purifying the administration, making the absence of toxic substances in the body a prerequisite for professional competence.

The measure does not stop with public employees. Through Article 5 bis 10, the law boldly extends its reach into schools and training institutions by authorizing periodic medical and psychological examinations for students to detect early indicators of substance use, subject to parental consent.² Despite the sensitivity of this measure, it establishes close preventive oversight aimed at suppressing addiction at its educational inception before it escalates.

Second Requirement: Therapeutic Justice under the Rule of Exemption in Exchange for Recovery

On the other side of the river, the addict stands perplexed between the hammer of punishment and the anvil of dependence on narcotic substances. Here, the legislator intervenes with a pragmatic humanitarian spirit, acknowledging that imprisonment may be more of a “school of crime” than a reformatory institution for the novice addict. The newly introduced mechanism of the “treatment order” serves as an alternative to criminal prosecution.

What is new in Law 25-03 is therapeutic flexibility. Pursuant to the amendment of Article 10, “commitment to a medical facility” is no longer the sole option. The competent judge may now, based on the opinion of the treating physician, order outpatient treatment, treatment within a specialized institution, or a combination of both.³ This flexibility reflects legislative realism that recognizes the limited capacity of treatment facilities and distinguishes between the occasional addict, who may be treated within their social environment, and the high-risk addict, who requires institutional isolation.

This approach reflects a maturation of criminal policy. Instead of overcrowding prisons with patients in need of treatment facilities, the law grants the public prosecutor and the investigating judge the authority to direct the addict toward detoxification.⁴

This shift reflects a transition from the logic of moral criminalization to that of a health and social approach, whereby the addict is viewed as a person in need of therapeutic intervention rather than a traditional adversary of justice. A treatment order does not constitute a relinquishment of the authority of the law, but rather a

1- Article 5 bis 9, Law No. 25-03, op. cit., p. 4.

2- Ibid., Article 5 bis 10, p. 4.

3- Ibid., Article 10 (as amended), p. 4.

4- Ahsan Bousquia, *Al-Wajiz fi Al-Qanoun Al-Jaza'i Al-'Aam*, 20th ed., Dar Houma, Algeria, 2023, p. 345.

reorientation of its instruments toward achieving deeper social benefit: reducing recidivism rates, protecting the family environment, and alleviating the burden on penal institutions. The suspension of prosecution remains contingent upon actual compliance with the treatment program, thereby preventing exploitation of the mechanism as a means of evading responsibility.

Although this mechanism appears compassionate, it is implicitly underpinned by a conditional threat: undergo treatment or face punishment. The legislator also strengthened the role of the treating physician in Article 10 bis 1 by granting the authority to propose modifications to the treatment regime to the judge, thereby rendering the therapeutic process dynamic and adaptable to the patient's condition.¹

This constitutes, par excellence, a legal bargain founded upon a dual commitment: the state provides treatment and psychological support, while the individual undertakes serious engagement in the recovery process. Failure to honor this commitment returns the public action to its normal course, as though treatment had been a conditional opportunity rather than an unconditional grant. In this sense, therapeutic justice does not abolish deterrence but reformulates it within a rehabilitative framework.

The real issue that emerges upon deeper analysis of these provisions lies not in the text but in the infrastructure. Do healthcare institutions possess sufficient capacity to accommodate the influx that the judiciary will redirect? The Egyptian experience under Narcotics Law No. 182 of 1960 and its amendments encountered the same difficulty, as the provision concerning commitment to treatment facilities remained for long periods without practical implementation due to the absence of available beds.² Reality has shown that legislative intent, however advanced, remains dependent upon material and human resources.

The Algerian legislator attempted to address this by providing for the establishment of specialized centers and by expanding the network of addiction treatment services. However, the effectiveness of this policy remains contingent upon the availability of qualified medical staff and integrated psychological and social rehabilitation programs that extend beyond physical detoxification to encompass the reintegration of the individual into their professional and family environment. Addiction is not merely a biological dysfunction but a complex phenomenon shaped by intertwined psychological, economic, and cultural factors.

Therapeutic justice also raises another issue concerning oversight of the implementation of the treatment program. Effective coordination mechanisms must be established between the judiciary and the health sector to ensure monitoring of the beneficiary's compliance with treatment, without compromising the confidentiality of

1- Article 10 bis 1, Law No. 25-03, op. cit., p. 4.

2- Abdellah Slimane, *Sharh Qanoun Al-Ijra'at Al-Jaza'iya Al-Jaza'iri: Al-Tahariyat Al-Khassa*, Office des Publications Universitaires, Algeria, 2022, p. 112.

medical data. The equation here is delicate. A certain degree of information exchange is necessary to achieve the judicial objective, while preserving the trust that forms the foundation of the therapeutic relationship.

Ultimately, the notion of "suspension of prosecution" is not a free certificate of exoneration, but rather a "freedom conditioned by recovery." This represents a modern penal philosophy that shifts the emphasis from general deterrence to individualized reform. It is a form of justice that does not view the addict as merely a number added to conviction statistics, but as a person who can be reintegrated into the sphere of social productivity, provided that he demonstrates, in practice, a genuine will to recover.

THE SECOND TOPIC: DETERRENT MEASURES AND SPECIAL INVESTIGATION AS THE LONG ARM OF THE LAW

If prevention is the shield, deterrence is the sword. Organized crime in the field of drugs no longer relies on the "double-bottom suitcase" or primitive cross-border smuggling. It has become transcontinental, digitally encrypted, and employs technologies that sometimes surpass those available to law enforcement agencies. Consequently, the legislature was compelled to abandon the cloak of traditional investigation and assume the attire of the "undercover agent" and the "digital monitor." Classical procedural rules based on simple material flagrancy have collapsed in the face of the complexity of criminal networks, necessitating the adoption of special investigative mechanisms that had previously been limited to corruption and terrorism offenses.

First Requirement: Special Investigative Techniques for Penetrating Digital and Operational Strongholds

Investigators are no longer required to wait until a crime occurs to apprehend the perpetrator. The new law grants them authorization to "create the opportunity" or accompany the criminal activity in order to uncover major actors. The mechanism of controlled delivery constitutes a qualitative leap in this regard. However, the most significant development in this law is the introduction of money as an investigative tool. In a bold pragmatic step inspired by Anglo-Saxon systems, Article 35 bis 1 provides for the possibility of granting financial incentives to individuals who provide information leading to the detection of serious crimes or the arrest of suspects. It is a form of incentivized reporting aimed at breaking the wall of silence, transforming the citizen from a passive witness into a paid informant. While this may raise ethical debate, it demonstrates considerable security effectiveness in dismantling closed drug trafficking networks.¹

Judicial police officers were also granted, pursuant to Article 36 bis 2, the authority to conduct parallel financial investigations to uncover the proceeds of

1- Article 35 bis 1, Law No. 25-03, op. cit., p. 7.

crime.¹ This means that the war is no longer directed solely against drugs, but also against the wealth generated by them. The mechanism allows the suspicious shipment to pass under the surveillance of security services and with judicial authorization, not because of an inability to seize it, but in order to track its path until it reaches the final beneficiary,² thereby dismantling the entire network.

Nevertheless, the risk inherent in this mechanism lies in its dual nature. It combines operational boldness with legal caution, as it must be conducted under strict judicial supervision, with precise determination of its temporal and geographical scope, so that it does not become a means of expanding suspicion without safeguards. Controlled delivery is not an unlimited authorization, but an exceptional measure governed by the philosophy of necessity and proportionality. It is justified only when the objective is to dismantle a complex criminal structure extending beyond the simple offender to organized transnational networks.

Concurrently, “electronic infiltration” emerges as an innovative mechanism that allows officers of the judicial police to assume fictitious identities within the digital sphere. One may envision an officer impersonating a buyer or intermediary in clandestine chat rooms. This measure, once regarded as a form of prohibited incitement, has now become an operational necessity. Crime is no longer committed solely in back alleys; it has migrated to encrypted servers and platforms that are difficult to track using conventional methods, thereby necessitating the development of investigative tools capable of penetrating these digital strongholds.

However, careful legal analysis raises the question of the boundary between “investigation” and “provocation,” a particularly delicate distinction that the French Court of Cassation has sought to delineate precisely in order to prevent procedural invalidity.³ Its jurisprudence has established that the intervention of an officer must remain limited to revealing an existing offense or a serious criminal project, rather than creating one. If investigative conduct moves beyond detection and contributes to generating the criminal intent in the mind of an individual who had not yet resolved to commit the offense, the measure becomes unlawful incitement that undermines the fairness of the trial.⁴

Under Algerian law, this practice is framed by prior authorization from the competent public prosecutor to ensure that such deception remains within the bounds of procedural legality. Judicial authorization is not a mere formal requirement, but a safeguard designed to balance investigative effectiveness with the protection of individual rights and freedoms, particularly the inviolability of private life and the

1- Ibid., Article 36 bis 2, p. 7.

2- Abdellah Slimane, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

3- Court of Cassation, Criminal Chamber, Judgment of 11 May 2006, File No. 05-85.736, French jurisprudence on provocation to evidence.

4- Ahsan Bousquia, *op. cit.*, p. 412.

confidentiality of communications. The determination of the duration of the operation, the nature of the assumed identity, and the permissible scope of communication are all elements intended to prevent deviations that might compromise the legitimacy of the evidence.

Alongside controlled delivery and electronic infiltration, the expansion of powers to intercept correspondence and monitor communications forms part of the special investigative techniques. These tools have become almost indispensable in confronting networks that rely on real-time coordination and advanced encryption. Nevertheless, the exercise of such powers remains subject to both prior and subsequent judicial oversight, whereby each measure is assessed in terms of its necessity and proportionality to the seriousness of the offense under investigation.

The philosophy governing these new mechanisms rests on a delicate balance. Organized transnational crime cannot be effectively confronted with rigid traditional tools, yet the fight against crime must not become a pretext for suspending fundamental guarantees. Accordingly, special investigative techniques constitute a double-edged instrument; their effectiveness depends on the rigor of their legal framework, and their legitimacy hinges on their capacity to ensure security without sacrificing the core principles of the rule of law.

Second Requirement: Intensification of Penalties with the Expansion of Criminalization

The legislator did not confine reform to updating preventive and therapeutic mechanisms but introduced new classifications and more deterrent penalties:

- Classification of hard drugs and the death penalty: For the first time, the legislator clearly distinguishes, in Article 21 bis, offenses relating to hard drugs and dangerous psychotropic substances, raising the penalty to life imprisonment, and even to the death penalty under Article 21 bis 2 if the offense results in the death of a person or is committed within the framework of an organized or terrorist criminal group.¹ This escalation reflects legislative alarm regarding lethal synthetic drugs.
- Protection of certain groups and the public function: Pursuant to Article 16 bis 2, the penalty reaches thirty years' imprisonment for anyone who exploits a minor or a person with special needs, or for any public official who abuses his position in the commission of these offenses.² The message is clear: exploitation of vulnerability or authority constitutes a red line.
- Driving under the influence: The legislator addressed the phenomenon of road terror, as Article 26 bis introduced a new aggravating circumstance. If the offender commits an offense, such as involuntary homicide or bodily injury, while under the influence of drugs confirmed by biological analysis, the

1- Articles 21 bis and 21 bis 2, Law No. 25-03, op. cit., p. 5.

2- Ibid., Article 16 bis 2, p. 4.

maximum penalty prescribed for that offense is applied.¹ In this context, the offender's body, through biological testing, becomes evidence of culpability that amplifies punishment.

The law has expanded the scope of criminalization to encompass acts that were not previously clearly criminalized or that existed within gray areas. Targeting minors or selling in the vicinity of educational institutions is no longer merely an ordinary aggravating circumstance but has been elevated to a felony punishable by life imprisonment.² The message is unequivocal: approaching schools is tantamount to playing with fire.

This intensification was not arbitrary but grounded in the conviction that vulnerable groups, foremost among them children and adolescents, constitute the weakest link in the equation of organized crime, and that their protection justifies expanding the scope of criminalization even at the expense of narrowing certain margins of individual freedom. The legislator has thus shifted from a logic of subsequent deterrence to one of anticipatory prevention, criminalizing acts of indirect incitement, facilitation, mediation, and any conduct that creates a fertile environment for the spread of toxic substances, even where actual consumption has not occurred. Consequently, criminal conduct is no longer measured solely by its outcome but also by its latent social danger and its capacity to produce structural disruption within the value system of the school and family environment.

The legislator also broadened the scope of criminalization to include acts related to the entire supply chain. The focus is no longer limited to the final dealer but extends to the financier, transporter, storage agent, intermediary, and anyone who contributes, in any manner, to the circulation of the illicit commodity within society. This expansion reflects a shift from a partial approach targeting the weakest link to a network-based approach that views crime as an integrated structure that can only be dismantled by criminalizing all its roles. The intensification of penalties in cases of recidivism or association with an organized group further consolidates a philosophy based on both specific and general deterrence, whereby criminal persistence is met with corresponding punitive escalation.

Moreover, the legislator addressed the phenomenon of electronic promotion. Those who offer narcotics through social media platforms are no less dangerous than those who sell them in dark corners; indeed, they are more dangerous due to their ability to reach thousands of victims at the click of a button. Article 16 bis of the new law seeks to block this "marketing of death" by penalizing anyone who uses electronic means for promotion or offering. This reflects legislative awareness that digital space is no longer a neutral virtual domain but has become a fertile environment for the emergence of transnational black markets that exploit targeting

1- Ibid., Article 26 bis, p. 6.

2- Article 12, Law No. 23-05, op. cit.

algorithms and electronic payment systems to conceal offenders' identities and complicate their detection.

From a comparative analytical perspective, Anglo Saxon legislation has been pioneering in criminalizing the digital possession of evidence of trafficking and in establishing expanded liability for encrypted advertisements and suspicious communications. The national legislator seeks to follow this approach by criminalizing the electronic conduct itself regardless of whether a transaction is actually completed. Mere offering or advertising has thus become an autonomous offense, insofar as it entails a real and direct danger threatening public health. This transformation aligns with the modern trend that emphasizes the principle of preventive protection of society.

Equally important is the provision of legal protection for whistleblowers and witnesses. Fear remains the primary ally of drug traffickers, and breaking the barrier of silence requires assurances that speaking out will not expose individuals to harm. Intensified criminalization cannot achieve its objective without a supportive procedural framework that guarantees confidentiality of identity and prevents any form of retaliation or pressure. Witness protection is not merely a technical measure but a political and legal message that the state stands behind those who align themselves with it. In this way, combating narcotics shifts from a confrontation between security agencies and offenders to a comprehensive societal effort in which the citizen becomes an active partner rather than a fearful bystander.

Conclusion:

We have turned the final pages of this analytical journey through the corridors of Laws 25-03 and 23-05, yet we have not closed the legitimate concern that inhabits every scholar of criminal law. Examining the provisions of the former texts and comparing them with the new legislative framework leaves a bittersweet impression marked by hope. The law is not a magic wand that the state waves to make the poison disappear from the streets; rather, it is a cog in a vast machine that requires the fuel of political will and human competence to function.

While reviewing the articles of this law, it becomes evident that the Algerian legislator has finally awakened to a painful reality: the threat no longer arrives solely in boats crossing the Mediterranean, but is now dispensed through medical prescriptions and sold via messaging applications. The most salient conclusion that emerges is that the state, through this amendment, has moved from a stage of defense to one of comprehensive offense, employing new and unconventional tools:

- Medically, through imposing preventive screening in employment and educational settings.
- Financially, through incentivizing whistleblowers with monetary rewards and confiscating proceeds to undermine the criminal economy.

- Punitively, through invoking the death penalty against traffickers of hard drugs.

However, this legislative offensive confronts practical challenges, and herein lies the real dilemma. The question remains: do police laboratories possess the technical capacity to detect the constantly evolving chemical compositions of hard drugs? Will financial incentives be implemented with sufficient transparency to prevent malicious or false accusations?

In terms of therapeutic justice, the analysis reveals a troubling gap between the ambition of the text and infrastructural realities. The policy of substituting punishment with treatment remains a commendable aspiration unless accompanied by substantial improvements in the healthcare system. A judge vested with the authority to refer an addict to a treatment facility may find no available bed and thus resort to imprisonment, at which point the philosophy of the law is undermined by reality. The same applies to the powers of electronic infiltration and controlled delivery. These measures constitute a candid acknowledgment of the sophistication of criminal activity, yet they remain double edged instruments that raise legitimate concerns regarding individual liberties unless surrounded by strict safeguards preventing the transformation of investigation into overreach.

In light of this complex perspective, it is not possible to close this file without addressing the core issues and proposing measures grounded in practical realities rather than abstract theorization.

First, treatment centers must be humanized and adequately funded. It is unreasonable to expect the judiciary to activate therapeutic measures while specialized centers meeting international standards remain insufficient. One proposal is to allocate a percentage of the funds and assets confiscated from drug barons to directly finance the construction and equipment of these facilities, thereby requiring offenders to bear the cost of treating their victims.

Second, there is a need for digitally trained judges and cyber investigators. Provisions authorizing electronic investigation will remain ineffective unless officers and judges receive advanced training in digital evidence and the dark web. Crime evolves at the speed of light, while training still advances at the speed of sound.

Finally, security diplomacy must be activated. Drug trafficking is inherently transnational, and internal fortification alone is insufficient when borders remain permeable. Algeria needs to update its bilateral agreements to include international controlled delivery and rapid exchange of digital evidence that transcends cumbersome diplomatic procedures.

Ultimately, Law 25-03 is a document of life or death, a legislative outcry against a tide threatening to engulf the future of an entire generation. The provisions are sound and notable for their boldness, yet the decisive factor will always be the hand that enforces the law: whether it will hesitate or act decisively, and whether it will

extend to provide treatment or merely to repress. Only time, within courtrooms and hospital wards, will provide the answer.

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