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Moscow Drug Use Soars by 10 Times

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Illegal drug abuse in the capital has grown at least 10 times since 2001, Vyacheslav Davydov, head of the Moscow branch of the Federal Drug Control Service, said at a news conference Monday.

He admitted that the figure is only an approximation, but said the growth is evident, which has prompted the watchdog to establish a special unit to fight the sale of illegal drugs over the Internet.

Global statistics show that police are generally able to intercept 5 to 10 percent of illegal drugs sold in a given region, Davydov said.

About 1 ton of drugs was confiscated in the capital in the first six months of this year, he added, without elaborating on what types of drugs. The figure puts annual consumption of illegal substances of all kinds in Moscow at 10 to 20 tons.

Davydov also said the belief that ethnic criminal groups oversee the drug trade is mostly a "stereotype," but some trends are nevertheless to be found, with Tajik groups usually handling heroin and Moldovans being the main suppliers of hashish.

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