

Russian Police Target Dozens of New 'Designer Drug' Substances

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Russian law enforcement authorities said they have uncovered scores of new types of drugs in the past year and a half.

Prison officials have [estimated](#) that nearly one-third of the 600,000 people incarcerated in Russia are serving drug-related sentences, while around 260 kilograms of illegal substances were seized in 2017. The Russian government has [struggled](#) to crack down on synthetic drugs as dealers continue to develop new compounds to circumvent bans.

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“Sixty-two previously unknown drugs and psychotropic substances, which can be used to manufacture more than 1,000 drugs, were brought under the Russian Interior Ministry’s control in the past year and a half,” Interior Minister Vladimir Kolokoltsev [said](#) on Monday.

The discovery has led to the seizure of more than 140 kilograms of synthetic cannabinoids as part of a single criminal case, he said at the ministry's anti-narcotics committee session.

Kolokoltsev added that only one out of four Russian regions had the tools to detect and identify so-called designer drugs.

The head of the committee bemoaned the anonymity offered by cryptocurrencies used in online drug marketplaces that [make](#) the industry next to impossible to police.

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