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The Link Between Cannabis and Increased Crime Rates

- [Guest Writer 1](#)

One of the 'weapons' wielded against Cannabis is the 'link' to crime. Supporters of prohibition argue that Cannabis related crime is increasing, which is often supported by statistics.

But there's a causal link here that is often omitted: the very prohibition that the supporters are attempting to justify.

I can quite honestly and accurately state that Cannabis related crime rose dramatically in 1971. Why? was there a sudden outbreak of crime in society?

Or could it be that before 1971 cultivation and possession of Cannabis was not a crime per se. So although the statistics would suggest that Cannabis use was more prevalent and damaging in the years following 1971, the reality is quite different.

Actually, it would probably fair to say that Cannabis **was** more damaging after 1971. By favouring prohibition over control the Government handed total control of the product to the black market. There are no minimum quality standards for Cannabis in the UK, it's illegal and if you buy it you've no backing if the quality is low.

Because there are no standards, buyers of Cannabis could easily be paying extra for the 'privilege' of smoking glass or boot polish. Cannabis resin (hashish) is often cut with other chemicals in order to artificially increase the weight so that a better profit can be obtain. Cannabis buds are sometimes sprayed with carcinogenic glass for the same reason.

By criminalizing cannabis users, the Government have not only artificially increased the crime rate, but they've ensured that the drug is far more dangerous for users than it needs to be. Worse, the draconian regime in the UK ensures that many [Cannabis users feel unable to take steps to minimise the health risks of consuming cannabis](#).

It Gets Worse

Every now and then, both the Government and individual Police forces decide that Cannabis is a serious problem. So in order to resolve this 'problem' they begin operations targeting users and suppliers. Although legally justified, this simply helps them to further entrench their position.

As soon as an attempt is made to foster debate, the Government claim that Cannabis is a danger to society, and often proceed to back their claims by referring to the 'increased' crime rate. Of course, they fail to mention that the statistics would be different if they had not run so many targeted operations.

Rather than target those users who actively cause society problems (see below), the Police go out of their way looking for **anyone** using Cannabis. There's no distinction made between a disabled person quietly smoking at home to relieve their pain and the teenagers sat in the middle of town blatantly using bong. The courts may infer a distinction, and the Police are authorised to (within certain tight criteria) but these operations seem to allow no discretion at all.

Problem Users

There are users of Cannabis who are problematic to society, just as there are those with alcohol. Personally (and I have no evidence to back this up), these people would probably continue to be problematic to society even if all they could lay their hands on was [Toblerone](#).

There will always be those who will be problematic, and to blame this on the substance they use is to ignore the root cause of the problem. I don't pretend to know what the answer is, but clearly targeting cannabis does not work.

The Link Between Cannabis and Crime

It's clear (to me at least) that the only links between Cannabis and crime are those that have been instituted by the Government themselves. The one exception may be users committing crime to purchase Cannabis, but then alcohol is legal and suffers from the same issue.

The Government knowingly handed control of Cannabis to the black market, so is it any surprise that there's a link to crime? Given that Cannabis supply is controlled by criminals, is it any surprise that we can't guarantee the purity of the final product?

What can we do about it?

The answer is simple, bring Cannabis back under control. Decriminalize the product and enforce strict purity regulations, take the market back away from the Criminal Gangs. Offer users some protection from the profiteering of those who don't value human lives.

In doing so, not only will we largely remove the criminal link (it's probably far too late to eradicate it, if America's Alcohol Prohibition is any guide) but we will be protecting future generations from the risks of contaminated cannabis. We'll be easing the burden on the Tax payer ([the war on drugs cost £19 billion](#)) and will allow those of us in pain to legally use the medication that works best for us.

Prohibitionists

I'd be keen to hear from anyone with views on the matter, especially those of you who support prohibition. All I ask is that you present me with a rational, fact based, argument. Feel free to e-mail me at guest1 AT freedom4all DOT org DOT uk but please be aware that if your argument is nothing more than "Cannabis is bad" I am unlikely to respond!!

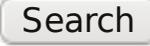


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 - [Australia](#) (2)
 - [Burundi](#) (1)
 - [Cambodia](#) (1)
 - [China](#) (7)
 - [Columbia](#) (1)
 - [Cuba](#) (2)
 - [Egypt](#) (1)
 - [France](#) (1)
 - [Gaza](#) (2)
 - [Iran](#) (1)
 - [Iraq](#) (1)
 - [Israel](#) (2)
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 - [Madagascar](#) (1)
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 - [Pakistan](#) (2)
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 - [Singapore](#) (1)
 - [South Africa](#) (3)
 - [Sri Lanka](#) (1)
 - [Sudan](#) (1)
 - [Syria](#) (1)
 - [Tunisia](#) (1)

- [Turkey](#) (2)
- [United Kingdom](#) (21)
- [USA](#) (8)
- [Informational](#) (4)
- [Issues](#) (45)
 - [Access to Medicine](#) (15)
 - [Capital Punishment](#) (4)
 - [Freedom of Speech](#) (18)
 - [Gay Rights](#) (2)
 - [Other Issues](#) (11)
 - [Religion](#) (4)
- [News](#) (23)
- [Organisations](#) (29)
 - [Amnesty International](#) (8)
 - [Freedom4All](#) (19)
 - [Guest Writers](#) (14)
 - [Human Rights Watch](#) (1)
 - [International Crisis Group](#) (1)
- [Uncategorized](#) (1)

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- [November 2010](#)
- [October 2010](#)
- [September 2010](#)
- [August 2010](#)
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