

U.N. board: Drug laws applied unequally

by UPI

VIENNA -- Unequal application of drug laws when prosecuting offenders could undermine standards the law seeks to enforce, a U.N. panel in Vienna said Wednesday. In its annual report, the International Narcotics Control Board noted progress in proportionally applying drug laws internationally since 1996, the panel said in a news release. However, some countries expend greater effort targeting low-level offenders and drug users, compared to identifying and punishing major drug traffickers and dismantling their activities. While pointing to the need to offer alternatives to prison for drug users, the board urged governments to pay attention to high-profile cases of drug abuse, such as celebrities who use drugs. How celebrities are treated could raise questions of judicial fairness and undermine social efforts to reduce demand for drugs, the report said. The board also noted the complexity of drug trafficking operations and the flow of drug funds across international borders. In line with the U.N. Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the INCB calls on governments to take "determined, secure, trusting and well coordinated action between law enforcement agencies, particularly the sharing of intelligence and evidence with countries that can take effective confiscation action."

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