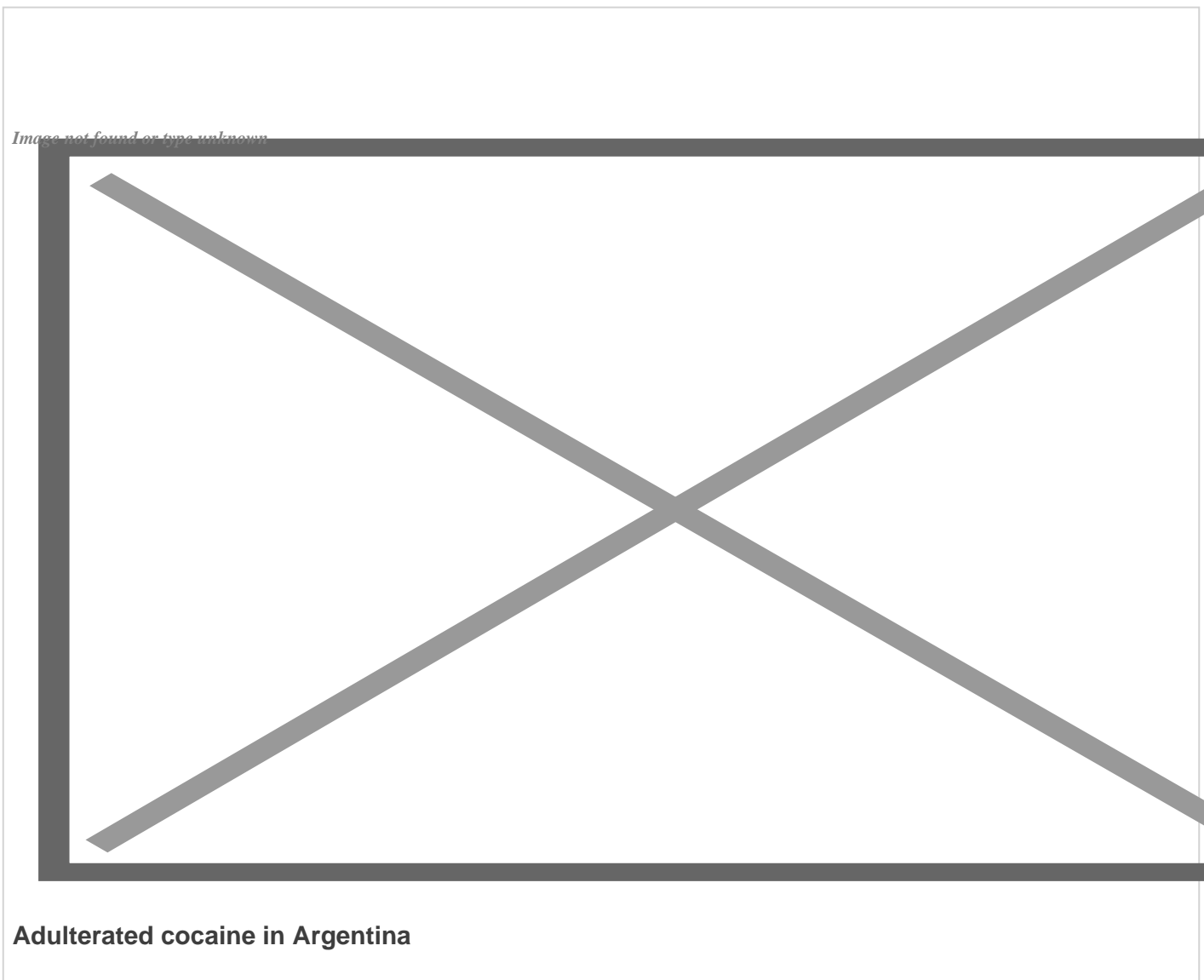


# *Avoidable tragedies*

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By Guillermo Alvarado

The Argentine society is shocked by the death of at least 23 people and the hospitalization in serious condition of 70 others, mostly young people, who consumed cocaine adulterated with a highly toxic substance in a neighborhood in the suburbs of Buenos Aires.

According to the information, some of those affected went to hospitals for medical help, but there were other consumers who chose to stay at home or in the streets where they died, so that the number of victims may increase.

As soon as the first information on the tragedy became known, the authorities carried out raids and managed to confiscate a large quantity of doses in the hands of retail drug distributors, thus preventing further damage.

Drug consumption is a plague that, to a greater or lesser extent, affects a large number of countries around the world today, but the approaches to combat it are not always the most effective.

The production, transport and sale of these harmful products are global phenomena, managed by organizations with international ramifications, so the fight cannot be at the level of isolated countries.

Faced with a common threat, the response must also be common, with a transparent and honest exchange of information and experiences.

Until now, in many places, the use of security forces, including the army, has been favored, which has not yielded the expected results, and Mexico is a good example of this.

It is true that production and sale are serious crimes, which require the action of the police and the courts, but this effort must be complemented by other sectors, such as education and health.

Traffickers are criminals, but the addict is a victim, a sick person who requires multidisciplinary attention and as José Martí said, that the best medicine is prevention, it is vital to protect young people to prevent them from taking the first step into that dark world, from which sometimes there is no return.

Otherwise, problems like those in the United States could occur, where in 2020 more than 93,000 consumers died from overdoses.

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime said in its June 2021 report that 275 million people used some type of narcotic drug in the 12 months prior to that date, while the perception of risk among young people dropped to 40 percent, certainly alarming data.

Tragic accidents such as the one in Argentina should call the attention of society and authorities to prevent this type of tragedy.

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