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The National Police of Ukraine have reported on Operation ‘Gentlemen’: 968 searches, one metric tonne of cannabis and 96 people detained

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On 22 September, the National Police of Ukraine summarised the results of the two phases of the nationwide anti-drug operation ‘Gentlemen’. According to the agency, the police seized 56,995 cannabis plants and 1,010 kg of cannabis, dismantled 23 grow-box laboratories, detained 96 people and notified 181 suspects of the charges against them.

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On 22 September 2026, the National Police of Ukraine announced the results of the two phases of the ‘Gentlemen’ special operation. In an official press release, the agency reported 968 searches, 56,995 cannabis plants seized, 1,010 kg of cannabis, 23 ‘grow box’ laboratories dismantled, 96 people detained and 181 people served with notices of suspicion. These figures have been published on the National Police’s website and shared on its official Telegram channel: NPU press release, Telegram post.

The operation, codenamed ‘Gentlemen’, was, according to the police, a nationwide operation. It was initiated by the Department for Combating Drug-Related Crime and the Main Investigation Directorate of the National Police, in coordination with the Office of the Attorney General. The authorities state that the aim was to identify groups which, according to the investigation, were involved in the illegal cultivation of narcotic plants, the production and sale of cannabis, and to prevent raw materials from entering the illegal market. It is important to interpret these statements precisely as the position of the law enforcement agencies, rather than as a fact established by a court: no sentences have yet been reported following the operation.

What the police said

In its final report, the National Police estimated the potential value of the seized products—which, according to the agency, did not reach the ‘black’ market—at more than 350 million hryvnias. The press release also states that the suspects are charged with offences under Articles 307, 309 and

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310 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine — the unlawful manufacture, storage, transport or sale of narcotic drugs, as well as the unlawful sowing or cultivation of opium poppies or cannabis. Under the most serious of these articles, the penalty may be up to 12 years' imprisonment with confiscation of property.

- **968** searches — the total figure for the two phases of the operation;
- **56 995** cannabis plants and **1,010 kg** cannabis – the declared quantity seized;
- **23** 'grow box'-type laboratories — reported as dismantled;
- **96** people — detained;
- **181** suspect — a person who has been served with a notice of suspicion;
- **more than 350 million UAH** — the police's estimate of the potential value of the produce on the black market.

Phase two: September raids in 23 regions and Kyiv

The police provided a separate account of the second phase of the operation, carried out in September. According to the National Police of Ukraine, law enforcement officers conducted a further 532 searches across 23 regions and the capital. Units from the criminal police and the investigative departments of the regional police headquarters took part in the operation, with tactical support provided by officers from the Patrol Police Department's Rapid Response Unit and special-purpose police units.

The National Police claim that the illegal crops were concealed amongst agricultural crops, dense vegetation, on private plots and derelict land, in woodland strips and on farmland. Following the second phase of the operation, the agency announced the seizure of more than 40,000 cannabis plants and 838 kg of cannabis. In addition, the police reports list amphetamine, alpha-PVP, mephedrone, methamphetamine, poppy straw and restricted-use medicines containing narcotic substances.

As part of the second phase, according to the National Police, the operations of 12 'grow-box' laboratories were shut down, equipment for growing, manufacturing and packaging drugs, vehicles, over 5 million UAH in national and foreign currency, weapons, ammunition and explosives were seized. The agency reported that 62 people had been detained under Articles 208 and 615 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of Ukraine, and that 107 suspects had been notified of the charges against them. These figures were also reported by the Ukrainian media, citing the National Police,

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including StopCor and OBOZ.UA.

The Zhytomyr incident: the largest ‘harvest’ in the NPU’s press release

The National Police cite the Zhytomyr region as an example of one of the largest cases uncovered. According to the agency, the cannabis was being grown amongst sunflowers, and whilst the ‘harvest’ was being gathered, the police arrested six members of the group. In this case, 570 kg of cannabis and 29,435 cannabis plants were reportedly seized. The police report that the suspects have been remanded in custody. A separate July report from the regional office of the National Police of Ukraine in Zhytomyr Oblast confirms that the first phase of Operation ‘Gentlemen’ in the region involved the detection of illegal crops, grow boxes and equipment for growing plants: Statement by the Main Directorate of the National Police in Zhytomyr Oblast dated 15 July 2026.

What remains behind the scenes for now

The public record of the case is currently based almost entirely on police reports. The names of those detained and the suspects have not been disclosed in the available materials; the editorial team has been unable to find the defence’s position or comments from the individuals involved in the case in open sources. Therefore, the current procedural status is as follows: some individuals have been detained, 181 individuals have been notified that they are under suspicion, investigations are ongoing, and, according to the police, the question of whether other individuals are under suspicion will be decided following the forensic analysis of the seized items.

There is also an editorial caveat regarding the figures. The total of 968 searches and the 532 searches carried out during the second phase are confirmed by the NPU’s official press release. Some Ukrainian media reports cite a figure of 435 searches in the first phase, but simply adding 435 and 532 gives 967, not 968. In this final report, we use the National Police’s overall figure and do not state the exact number of July searches without separate confirmation from the original source.

Sources

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Original publication

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