the corruptive influence of traffickers has hampered counternarcotics efforts in that country.

Venezuela has taken adequate steps to meet the goals and objectives of the 1988 UN Convention, to which it is a party, especially in its vigorous response to illicit crop cultivation. Venezuela quickly eradicated in 1994, with USG assistance, over 1,000 hectares of coca and opium poppy cultivation in Zulia state near its western border with Colombia. The government generally meets the goals of bilateral counternarcotics agreements with the USG. In addition, the Venezuela-Colombia border agreement to keep Venezuela free of narcotics traffickers and the successful eradication effort indicates serious Government of Venezuela (GOV) interest in preventing traffickers from making incursions into Venezuela.

Seizures of cocaine increased in 1994 to 5.0 mt, indicating both more trafficker use of Venezuela and better interdiction of cocaine by Venezuelan counternarcotics forces. Venezuela's bilateral agreement with the United States to conduct counternarcotics air interdiction operations reflects invigorated cooperation on strategic initiatives.

In 1994, the Guardia Nacional (GN) seized 5.0 mt of cocaine and 15 kilograms (kg) of heroin. However, the recent arrests of two GN members for trafficking 250 kg of cocaine through Maiquetia Airport evinces corruption problems at lower levels in the organization. The GN quickly removed the two soldiers and began an investigation of the unit.

Although President Caldera has spoken out strongly against narco-corruption, most recently at the December Summit of the Americas, corruption in Venezuela remains a serious problem. A convicted trafficker, Larry Tovar Acuna, fled to Colombia after fraudulently obtaining a pardon, and the Venezuelan government made an extradition request to Colombia for Tovar. In addition, a corrupt judge released members of the Sinforoso Caballero money laundering organization. The Venezuelan Supreme Court reopened the case and investigated the judge.

Venezuela has not yet approved its draft national counternarcotics strategy and has not begun to control precursor and essential chemicals. With more attention from President Caldera, Venezuela's compliance with bilateral agreements on chemical control and money laundering measures should improve.

## Vietnam

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam has a significant opiate abuse problem and is emerging as a location for drug trafficking. Illicit opium production exceeded 1,000 hectares, but the precise extent of cultivation remains unclear. Estimates have ranged as high as 14,000 hectares during the 1992/3 growing season. The government is undertaking a serious eradication effort and has pledged to eliminate opium cultivation, which exists primarily in relatively inaccessible regions of the north.

Opiate addiction in urban areas is a serious problem. The government, with the aid of the United Nations International Drug Control Program (UNDCP), is formulating a drug control plan to combat both production and consumption in Vietnam. Economic reforms and the growing overall volume of the Southeast Asian heroin trade have made Vietnam an emerging transit point for heroin destined for Taiwan, the United States and other locations.

Corruption is a complicating factor in domestic enforcement efforts, but there is no evidence that the government tolerates, condones or profits from drug trafficking activity.

The government is not a party to the 1988 UN Convention, but is developing a program to work toward fulfillment of the goals and objectives of the Convention. This program is embodied in the drug control plan being drafted with the assistance of UNDCP. In coordination with UNDCP, the government is drafting legislation that meets the goals of the Convention.