

THAILAND NO LONGER WANTS TO BE CANNABIS SHOPS HAVEN



A year and a half after cannabis consumption was decriminalized in Thailand, the law is likely to be tightened again. The new Thai government wants to completely ban the recreational use of cannabis.

The Thai government surprisingly legalized cannabis in the summer of 2022. Within a very short time, the country became the new Mecca for marijuana fans from all over the world. **The Ministry of Health even issued a guide of cannabis shops.**

Whether locals, expats, or tourists in Thailand, the enthusiasm for the cannabis shops that have sprung up like mushrooms knew no bounds almost a year ago. The shops ranged from somewhat shady establishments to upscale specialty shops.

Because smoking cannabis was still prohibited in public places, many shop owners set up private smoking areas. This will probably be over soon. Thailand's new government, which has been in office since late last summer, is considering a law that would ban cannabis for recreational use again.

The Thai Ministry of Health passed a draft law this week. This stipulates that marijuana may only be used for medical purposes. It is not yet known whether the purchase of cannabis should require medical evidence.

What is certain, however, is that advertising and marketing campaigns for cannabis buds and extracts, as well as other cannabis products, should also be banned. According to the draft law, anyone who does not adhere to the requirements will face severe consequences. There is a risk of high fines or prison sentences of up to a year.

Thailand became the first country in Asia to decriminalize cannabis in June 2022. Many other countries in the region impose long prison sentences or even death sentences for stoners and cannabis dealers.

The Thai advocacy group Future Cannabis Network expressed disappointment with the draft law in an initial statement.

Tourism experts do not expect that a stricter approach to cannabis would cause lasting damage to the tourism industry. Marijuana is only one reason for a few foreign tourists to travel to Thailand. Experts assume that if the new law is approved, around 20 percent of cannabis shops will have to close due to falling demand.

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