

Norwegian prosecutors demand bitcoins for drug sales

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Three men charged in Norway with selling drugs online have to pay back 120 bitcoins (\$144,300) on top of millions in Norwegian kroner—the first time the Scandinavian country has demanded to be paid in the electronic currency, a prosecutor said Friday.

Richard Beck Pedersen says the men in their 30s allegedly used underground websites to sell drugs, and that most of the payment was done with bitcoins because transactions with the [electronic currency](#) have a high degree of anonymity.

Beck Pedersen said the trio behind the online shops was formally charged Friday with selling drugs.

He added investigators have "evidence for the sale in bitcoins," adding prosecutors also demand they pay 3.1 million Norwegian kroner (\$360,167). A trial is expected later this year.

"This is in no way an official Norwegian recognition of the [digital currency](#)," Beck Pedersen told The Associated Press.

During the two-year investigation, which he described as "challenging," Norwegian police worked with investigators abroad and the case was linked to the drug-selling website Silk Road that was shut down in 2013 when its founder was arrested in the United States.

The men formed an organized group, he said, adding they were arrested in June 2015 in greater Oslo. Investigators seized "considerable amounts of narcotics," several computers and an illegal indoor marijuana farm. No details were available.

The narcotics were sent by mail to customers.

Bitcoin allows people to buy goods and services and exchange money without involving banks, credit card issuers or other third parties.

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