



14TH UNITED NATIONS CONGRESS ON CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE KYOTO, JAPAN 7 – 12 MARCH 2021



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International cooperation vital to address all forms of crime, terrorism & new & emerging forms of crime

The challenges in preventing and responding to crime being discussed at the 14th UN Crime Congress are ones that could hardly have been anticipated when the first Congress was held 66 years ago. The need for strengthened international cooperation, especially for new and emerging forms of crime, has never been greater.

Over the years, international cooperation and related harmonized approaches among States have progressively led to international instruments and treaties covering narcotic drugs, transnational organized crime, corruption and terrorism which have almost universal adherence. They offer parties a legal basis for judicial and law enforcement cooperation on extradition, mutual legal assistance, asset recovery and joint investigations.

Weak rule of law institutions and social and economic vulnerabilities create opportunities for criminal activities. Organized criminal groups have diversified their profit-making criminal activities and are cooperating opportunistically with terrorist groups.

Countering the constantly evolving nature of terrorist threats needs strengthened international, regional, sub-regional and bilateral cooperation. No Member State can address terrorism alone.

Obstacles to international cooperation continue to exist, even though it is central to addressing all forms of transnational crime including terrorism and new and emerging forms of crime. Practical challenges include differences in legislation or criminal justice standards, insufficient knowledge of the applicable treaties, and prevailing practices regarding national and international extradition and mutual legal assistance. Lack of coordination within and between States and lack of trust also play a part.

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) supports several international and regional cooperation platforms and networks that aid cooperation in criminal matters and the effective

exchange of information and expertise and build trust and create contacts among practitioners.

Terrorism in all its forms and manifestations

The prevention and countering of terrorism has increasingly posed challenges for individual Member States and the international community. Terrorists come from diverse backgrounds and are driven by various motives. Terrorist groups are also diversifying their means of attack.

Terrorist and violent extremist groups are increasingly inspiring individuals to carry out terrorist attacks through the Internet and social media.

Terrorist groups use the Internet as an operational tool for recruitment, for facilitating and financing attacks and for inciting violence. UNODC has assisted several countries in training criminal justice and law enforcement officers to conduct open-source online investigations and to transform the results of those investigations into evidence admissible in court.

Terrorist groups can benefit from transnational organized crime, for example illicit trafficking in arms, people, drugs, cultural artefacts and the illicit trade in natural resources.

Several terrorist groups have used kidnapping for ransom to raise funds, in particular in the Middle East, North Africa and West Africa.

Terrorist groups use the weaknesses of the international financial system to their advantage. In many respects, the private sector is the first line of defence against the financing of terrorism. UNODC collaborates with the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and other partners to develop tools to support Member States in their efforts to counter the financing of terrorism.



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Terrorism has tragic effects on victims and their families. It is essential to incorporate the rights of victims into the criminal justice system.

To counter the terrorist threat, it is essential to strengthen international, regional, sub-regional and bilateral cooperation. States must have the capacity to provide swift and effective support to one another to combat evolving global terrorist threats rapidly and bring terrorists to justice.

New and emerging forms of crime

New and emerging forms of crime are frequently regarded as being high-profit and low risk, which distinguishes them from more traditional types of crime. The UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and associated protocols can help address new and emerging forms of crime.

Cybercrime

Most offences that come under the umbrella term cybercrime are committed for the profit they bring, often by organized criminal groups. Using information technology for criminal purposes is a relatively new phenomenon.

The methods of cybercriminals are constantly evolving at the speed of technological advancements while the development of national and international standards and mechanisms are following at a more modest pace. UNODC's Global Programme on Cybercrime aims to support Member States in establishing specialized international investigative cooperation in the field of cybercrime that is proportionate, legal, accountable and necessary.

Environmental crime

The world continues to witness an unprecedented surge in wildlife trafficking that irreversibly destroys the natural wealth of countries and undermines conservation efforts. Some positive developments have been noted, such as a decrease in ivory and rhino horn prices, which may indicate decreased demand. Other developments are more worrisome, such as the increase in pangolin trafficking.

Through various UNODC global programmes, countries are supported in their efforts to ensure

the success of seizures, backtracking investigations, prosecutions and the building of sustainable connectivity between customs and other national agencies.

Trafficking in cultural property

Cultural property is being stolen or unlawfully excavated and illicitly exported to many parts of the world with the help of modern and sophisticated techniques. The looting of cultural artefacts is hardly new. Nonetheless the trade in cultural artefacts remains the largest unregulated market in the world and an attractive channel through which to launder money.

Cultural property and artefacts have been deliberately destroyed or trafficked in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Syria, among other countries.

There is a lack of reliable data on the crime and legislative frameworks need to be developed or strengthened. Investigative capacity needs building and tackling it needs to involve auction houses, art handlers and museums.

Trafficking in human organs

It is estimated that five to 10 per cent of all kidney and liver transplants are conducted with illegally obtained organs. The shortage of organs on the global market is driving this crime which operates across borders in collusion with medical professionals and relies on corrupt and fraudulent practices. Organ 'brokers' recruit donors who may receive an agreed financial payment, from among vulnerable members of society. The provision of the service is often driven by poverty. Trafficking in people for the purpose of removal of organs remains an underreported offence whose victims are difficult to detect.

Other new and emerging forms of crime

Crime related to falsified medical products constitutes a public health threat and can lead to increased morbidity and mortality, higher disease prevalence, progression of antimicrobial resistance and a loss of confidence in health systems.



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Smuggling of tobacco products is another form of crime with public health dimensions that has gained increasing attention.

Maritime crime which encompasses several types of crime committed at sea, including piracy, is also

often referred to as a new and emerging form of crime. The array of challenges raised by crimes committed on the high seas means international cooperation mechanisms are essential to tackle it.