



# Security Council

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## Action taken by Member States and United Nations entities to address the issue of linkages between terrorism and organized crime

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### I. Introduction

1. On 19 July 2019, the Security Council adopted resolution [2482 \(2019\)](#), in which it expressed concern that terrorists could benefit from organized crime, whether domestic or transnational, as a source of financing or logistical support through, among other activities, trafficking in arms, persons, drugs, artefacts, cultural property, the illicit trade in natural resources and wildlife and the abuse of legitimate commercial enterprise, non-profit organizations, donations, crowdfunding and proceeds of criminal activity, including but not limited to kidnapping for ransom, extortion and bank robbery, as well as transnational organized crime at sea.

2. It requested the Secretary-General to submit a joint report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Office of Counter-Terrorism, with input from relevant entities of the United Nations system, including the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, on action taken by Member States and United Nations entities to address the issue of linkages between terrorism and organized crime, whether transnational or domestic.

3. The present report, submitted in response to the above-mentioned request, is informed by contributions from 50 Member States and 15 United Nations entities. Detailed herein are measures implemented or planned by States, at the policy, legislative and operational levels, to address the linkages between terrorism and organized crime and action taken by United Nations entities, including those based in the field, to support States in those efforts. Areas in which States have actively addressed the resolution and those in which further efforts would be beneficial are highlighted.

4. Member States reported various manifestations of the linkages between terrorism and organized crime, most notably regarding the financing of terrorism. Some reported opportunistic alliances in which terrorists and organized crime groups cooperated on the basis of shared hostile perspectives towards national authorities, limited socioeconomic opportunities, shared operational territory or ethnic background or for profit. Others reported linkages based on personal relationships potentially developed in prisons.



5. Some Member States described linkages between terrorism and organized crime involving the smuggling of migrants, the illicit trade in arms, light weapons and other military equipment, fraudulent documents, kidnapping for ransom, car theft, illicit mineral extraction and trafficking in drugs, cultural property or other licit or illicit goods. Other reported manifestations include the involvement of organized criminal groups in transporting terrorists across borders and of returning foreign terrorist fighters in organized crime activities.

6. Some Member States, however, observed that criminal organizations were increasingly uninterested in cooperating with terrorist groups, in some cases to avoid possible additional scrutiny from the national authorities. Others noted that, owing to the limited terrorist activity in their countries or the lack of investigative capacity, the existence of linkages between terrorism and organized crime could not be confirmed.

## II. Action by Member States

### A. Legislative responses

7. Responding to the need to establish legislative frameworks that address the links between terrorism and organized crime, many Member States emphasized their ratification of international and regional counter-terrorism legal instruments, including the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. States also reported on the ratification of international legal instruments against organized crime, including the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto, the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 and regional treaties such as the Convention on Cybercrime and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

8. In implementing those instruments, many Member States adopted comprehensive legal frameworks criminalizing a range of acts of terrorism, including preparatory or support acts and financing of terrorism, so as to allow for the prosecution of those who provide support for terrorism, including organized criminal groups. States also reported criminalizing acts related to foreign terrorist fighters, in accordance with the provisions of Security Council resolutions [2170 \(2014\)](#), [2178 \(2014\)](#) and [2396 \(2017\)](#).

9. Member States have implemented or enhanced national legislation to criminalize terrorism financing and money-laundering, also in accordance with Security Council resolution [2462 \(2019\)](#).<sup>1</sup> Some reported that the financing of terrorism had been criminalized as a stand-alone offence, while others said that they had increased the relevant penalties. States have strengthened mechanisms for the prevention, detection, control, investigation and prosecution of those crimes, including measures to regulate electronic financial transactions, to deal with proceeds of crime and asset freezing and for listing individuals and entities subjected to targeted financial sanctions as required in relevant United Nations instruments and resolutions and Financial Action Task Force recommendations.

10. Some legislative updates have strengthened the role of specific agencies and supported inter-agency coordination on measures related to terrorism financing and money-laundering. Member States made particular reference to the importance of the roles and efforts of financial intelligence units and customs authorities.

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<sup>1</sup> See the joint report of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team on actions taken by Member States to disrupt terrorist financing, prepared pursuant to paragraph 37 of resolution [2462 \(2019\)](#) (S/2020/493, annex).

11. Member States highlighted criminal legislative provisions specifically relevant to addressing the linkages between terrorism and organized crime, including the enhancement of investigative techniques using new technologies, witness protection measures and cybercrime provisions. Several have also updated legislation promoting cooperation and information-sharing at the national level.

12. Some Member States noted the intersection between their legislation on terrorism and on organized crime. In one State, organized crime offences can be prosecuted in parallel with terrorism offences. In another, meeting the characteristics of a terrorist group does not preclude the application of the provisions related to organized crime. Other States reported legal provisions to treat membership of a transnational criminal group as an aggravating circumstance for sentencing. However, some federal States reported challenges in prosecuting cases involving organized crime and terrorism when terrorism was a federal offence and organized crime was handled by state-level courts.

13. A number of Member States highlighted the importance of addressing the links between trafficking in drugs and terrorism financing, with one noting that its national counter-narcotics legislation criminalized related crimes to address links between financing, organization and distribution channels for trafficking in drugs and terrorism financing.

14. In terms of efforts to address the linkages between terrorism and organized crime, several Member States reported amendments to bring legislation on trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants into line with the Protocols to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. One referenced higher penalties for sexual exploitation, trafficking in organs and trafficking in minors. Others focused on protection and services for victims of trafficking, preventing victims from being forcibly returned to their home countries and the forfeiture of the proceeds of those crimes to a special fund to combat the issue and provide rehabilitation for victims.

15. Some Member States indicated that their national legislative frameworks relating to trafficking in and sales of arms and for regulating dual-use goods provided for higher criminal penalties when firearms, ammunition, explosives or equipment are unlawfully purchased, stored, carried, manufactured, transported, transferred, sold or used for terrorist purposes.

16. Member States reported on legislation addressing links between trafficking in cultural property or artefacts and terrorism, which imposed, under penalty of criminal sanction, specific duties of diligence on art dealers and auction houses that traded in cultural property, such as submitting suspicious transaction reports, and customs legislation requiring that cultural property be declared at borders. Other legislation prohibits the import, export, transit, sale, distribution and acquisition of cultural property that was exported illegally or stolen or looted from Iraq or the Syrian Arab Republic, in accordance with Security Council resolution [2199 \(2015\)](#).

17. Legislative measures to prevent and combat corruption were mentioned by several Member States as an important element in addressing terrorism and organized crime. Those laws notably include requirements for State officials to report on irregularities discovered in the course of their work and whistle-blower protection.

18. Many Member States underlined the importance of legal frameworks that supported international cooperation on criminal matters, including extradition and mutual legal assistance, in addressing the linkages between terrorism and organized crime. States have negotiated bilateral extradition and mutual legal assistance treaties and enacted legislation to provide for jurisdiction over acts committed abroad, if certain conditions are met.

## B. Strategic and policy responses

19. Member States have developed national strategic frameworks and action plans on countering terrorism and security to facilitate cooperation and the exchange of information between agencies, implement good practice and strengthen operational capacity to address terrorism, violent extremism conducive to terrorism and linkages with organized crime. Many have produced corresponding multisectoral intervention plans that address terrorism and terrorism financing issues, focusing on detection, prevention, protection, pursuit and response. Under such plans, national counter-terrorism units are often established or strengthened to lead the efforts.

20. Other States highlighted the development and implementation of national strategies and intervention plans for preventing and countering violent extremism conducive to terrorism. The strategies engage Governments, civil society and religious communities in a whole-of-society approach that incorporates dialogue and conflict prevention, good governance, respect for human rights, youth participation, health policy, gender equality, strategic communications on the Internet and education initiatives, including the development of religious tolerance curricula.

21. Many Member States consider preventing money-laundering and terrorism financing to be key elements in their national counter-terrorism frameworks. They have conducted multisectoral or targeted terrorism financing risk assessments to identify, evaluate and mitigate current threats with regard to money-laundering, terrorism financing and financing of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. States draw on the assistance of international or regional organizations, utilizing World Bank or other risk assessment methodologies and carrying out assessments in compliance with Financial Action Task Force recommendation 1. The assessments contribute to an evidence-based approach to regulating sectors with a significant risk for terrorism financing.

22. Member States have created national financial action plans and strategies against money-laundering and terrorism financing on the basis of risk assessments, but also according priority to the implementation of Security Council resolutions [1267 \(1999\)](#) and [1373 \(2001\)](#) and subsequent resolutions and related sanctions measures, and in some cases specifically addressing the potential linkages between terrorism and organized crime. In many States, working groups and committees have been established to draft and implement the action plans, coordinate national efforts and liaise with other States and international partners to respond to Financial Action Task Force standards and targeted financial sanctions and obligations pursuant to relevant Council resolutions.

23. Member States noted the importance of targeting the proceeds of crime and reported on the development of national strategies or strategic principles for tracing, freezing, seizing, confiscating and recovering instrumentalities and proceeds of crime and countering the financing of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

24. Member States highlighted the importance of combating organized crime through the development of multisectoral policies and strategies. Some have updated strategies to consider new trends in terrorism and organized crime, including changes in criminal use of technology, and to provide a reference framework for national officials to prevent and combat criminal phenomena with a focus on the linkages between terrorism and organized crime. One State reported the development of a new policy road map to address the linkages and noted the subsequent development of national criminal policy to enhance technological capacity during criminal investigations and adjudication.

25. Member States referenced policy efforts to comprehensively address forms of trafficking, including in drugs, firearms and cultural property, which could have links

to terrorism. Those efforts included strategies to dismantle criminal organizations trafficking in drugs and confiscate drugs and chemical precursors, the development of standard operating procedures for counter-narcotics forces to monitor and counter terrorism financing through trafficking in drugs, standards to regulate firearms, including their deactivation and the implementation of amnesty programmes, and national action plans on trafficking in persons to ensure coordination between national public institutions, non-governmental organizations and source countries.

26. Member States described efforts to combat environmental crime by dismantling transnational criminal organizations, with one, in response to Security Council resolution [2482 \(2019\)](#), having recently prepared a policy paper on environmental crime as a funding source for terrorism.

27. The negative impact of corruption on government efforts to tackle terrorism and organized crime was noted by Member States, which reported the preparation of multi-year national and regional strategies against corruption with measures for prevention, detection and repression and to support international cooperation.

28. Several Member States acknowledged policy-level engagement and close cooperation with a range of United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, the Office of Counter-Terrorism, UNODC and the International Organization for Migration, as well as regional organizations and other technical assistance partners, such as the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the Global Counterterrorism Forum, to address the linkages between terrorism and organized crime and respond to resolution [2482 \(2019\)](#), the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and other relevant United Nations resolutions on terrorism and organized crime. That work includes participation in and the organization of conferences and other policy forums on thematic issues, technical assistance and capacity-building programmes on terrorism and organized crime.

29. Several Member States are conducting or have conducted research in cooperation with national criminal justice agencies, focused on the linkages between terrorism and organized crime or issues that may be related, such as trafficking in drugs and the financing of foreign terrorist fighters. Other States supported the research efforts of international organizations such as INTERPOL and UNODC.

### **C. Collection and sharing of intelligence**

30. Member States have taken measures to enhance the collection and sharing of intelligence, including through the establishment or expansion of national multi-agency intelligence or specialized coordination centres on specific issues, such as counter-terrorism and trafficking in drugs. The coordination platforms promote participation and information exchange on terrorism and organized crime and allow for the joint monitoring and assessment of threats and responses, such as the development of focused intelligence analysis on trafficking in persons and potential linkages with terrorism.

31. In some Member States, specialized operations centres, for example on maritime operations, support an integrated, inter-agency approach to detecting and responding to a broad range of illicit activities. Others reported intelligence collection and analysis responses, including the regular analysis of potential terrorism targets, the planning of mitigating measures and the collection of open-source intelligence through social media. Some States have developed watch lists or databases of specific risk groups, such as foreign terrorist fighters and drug traffickers, to analyse trends, assess risks and develop cases for investigation.

32. Member States highlighted the usefulness of intelligence-led policing to address the linkages between terrorism and organized crime, including the establishment of intelligence analysis centres involving police forces, intelligence agencies, prisons and military forces, which collect and analyse information from national and international databases, as well as intelligence gathered from special investigative techniques and informants, among other sources. While some States reported legal restrictions on sharing intelligence between the intelligence community and law enforcement authorities, in other jurisdictions the legal system supported such sharing, with possibilities to adduce intelligence-derived information in court.

33. In many States, financial intelligence units collect and analyse financial intelligence and disseminate it to law enforcement agencies to identify patterns and linkages between terrorism and organized crime. Coordination groups can facilitate financial intelligence exchange and provide multidisciplinary intelligence to police and tax units dealing with serious crimes, including terrorism financing.

34. Member States have enhanced information exchange with financial institutions, including through public-private partnerships that help to identify sectoral risks and mitigation strategies and share real-time leads to help financial institutions to detect terrorism financing. Some States, however, noted legal obstacles to public-private information exchange.

#### **D. Border security measures and interdiction**

35. Effective border security and screening were identified by many Member States as important responses to addressing linkages between terrorism and organized crime, the perpetrators of which exploit porous borders for trafficking, terrorist travel and terrorism financing.

36. Member States have developed and implemented national border management strategies, strengthening land, maritime and air border controls on both goods and individuals, according priority to the identification of various forms of trafficking and prohibiting the entry of persons associated with terrorist groups or criminal organizations.

37. Some Member States have tightened security at maritime borders and ports by improving control systems for people, cargo and baggage in passenger port terminals and cargo facilities, undertaking early checks of documents for ships arriving in national ports, expanding new technologies for maritime traffic control systems, improving risk analysis through coordination with intelligence and criminal justice agencies and expanding monitoring along the entire territorial maritime coastline.

38. Reported aviation security measures include the implementation of new aviation security and risk identification systems and improved cooperation with other countries. Specifically, the implementation of an advance passenger information and passenger name record data system for the civil aviation sector, in accordance with Security Council resolution [2396 \(2017\)](#), was emphasized by States as a key border security measure. Those systems monitor the transit of passengers in order to better detect and prevent the travel of terrorists and other criminals involved in serious crimes, with the support of specialized units.

39. Member States reported building the capacity of national customs agencies through the establishment of specialized units on specific forms of organized crime and closer cooperation between customs and law enforcement agencies. Those efforts identify possible connections between terrorism and organized crime groups and produce analysis on smuggling trends and networks that can feed into border control activities, such as tightened controls on the import and export of cultural property.

## E. Investigation and prosecution

40. Many Member States reported on structural arrangements that increased their capacity to investigate and prosecute crimes involving linkages between terrorism and organized crime, including the establishment of investigative and prosecution units focused on specialized crimes, such as countering terrorism, narcotics or trafficking in persons, and placing financial investigation teams within those units. The units can be centralized at the national level or placed at the provincial level. Their work is often guided by protocols emanating from national strategies and led by a national coordinator or coordinating body facilitating cooperation between relevant authorities, non-governmental organizations and international bodies.

41. Many Member States encourage close inter-agency cooperation between financial intelligence, military, law enforcement, prosecution, aviation, customs, coast guard policy officials and the private sector, at both the working and management levels.

42. In some jurisdictions, operational coordination takes place through task forces on specialized issues or joint investigative teams. The task forces may be established formally through national regulations or policies or operate informally. They allow information to be exchanged on specific cases and the development of criminal analysis and joint investigation and prosecution strategies. Other Member States utilize different approaches to promoting cooperation: one tasks senior prosecution officials with monitoring ongoing cases, ensuring common strategies and promoting cooperation, linking different units if necessary; another tasks its counter-terrorism investigative unit with ensuring cooperation between specialized units dealing with organized crime; and a third expanded the mandate of its organized crime unit to incorporate terrorism and enlarged the role of its district prosecutors to include organized crime and terrorism. Nevertheless, some States noted challenges in sharing information between prosecutorial and non-prosecutorial services owing to strict legal frameworks.

43. Member States noted the importance of financial investigations, often led by specialized financial investigators, in addressing the linkages between terrorism and organized crime. Terrorism financing coordination committees or task forces bring together representatives of various agencies, including prosecution, interior, finance, foreign affairs, law enforcement and the central bank, to find common solutions and raise awareness of Financial Action Task Force recommendations, including among local investigators and prosecutors.

44. Cooperation between national and local authorities was mentioned as a possible challenge, given the complex and often transnational nature of terrorism and organized crime cases. To overcome that obstacle, one Member State has designated one prosecution representative per region to coordinate with national agencies on terrorism and organized crime matters, while in other States, local criminal justice officials are assigned to joint task forces.

45. Member States utilized a range of investigative techniques to address the linkages between terrorism and organized crime, including covert surveillance, wiretapping, communication interception and electronic surveillance, alongside more standard methods. Several States noted that those methods required prior judicial authorization and adherence to proper legal procedures and human rights standards to ensure that the information obtained was admissible in court.

46. Several Member States updated guidelines on financial investigations to task terrorism and organized crime investigators and prosecutors with examining the financial aspects of all cases, conducting financial investigations of all proceeds-generating crimes, detecting, freezing and confiscating proceeds of crime and prosecuting offenders.

47. Member States use criminal databases to establish typologies and risk factors in relation to terrorism and serious crimes to guide investigations, with one noting that

its national terrorism case database could be accessed by national and local prosecutors alike.

48. Several Member States utilize plea bargaining and build on shared information to expand investigations, while others prosecute terrorism cases under non-terrorist statutes to protect sensitive intelligence sources and methods. Some use a broad range of legal approaches to disrupt the financing of terrorism and organized crime, noting that, outside of the usual criminal statutes on terrorism financing, other criminal charges related to financial activities, false statements and fraud or administrative measures such as fines or asset forfeiture can be utilized.

49. Some Member States highlighted the importance of combating corruption through measures such as codes of conduct, segregation of duties and adequate control systems, promotion of transparency and integrity, training and awareness-raising and consistent monitoring and prosecution of corruption offences.

50. To build national and regional capacity to address those threats, many Member States conduct training for criminal justice officials and benefit from training led by bilateral, regional and international technical assistance providers. Training activities are often determined through regular training needs assessments and are focused on intelligence and information analysis, terrorism financing and money-laundering, including through virtual assets, preventing and combating economic and financial crimes, countering trafficking in drugs and in persons, combating corruption, support for victims and terrorism profiling. Some States have established national criminal justice training centres focused on specialized issues, while others have developed guides, manuals and booklets on terrorism and organized crime topics to build knowledge and share good practice with national and local officials.

## **F. International cooperation**

51. Many Member States mentioned extensive bilateral and regional intelligence and information-sharing, including through agreements on the exchange and mutual protection of classified information. Some established units within the national police, intelligence or security agencies to continuously monitor the intelligence and criminal data exchanged through international channels, so as to guide intelligence analysis, including by tracking illicit goods and persons of interest, and ongoing criminal investigations.

52. The use of INTERPOL databases and tools, including green or red notices, was highlighted by Member States as helping to facilitate organized crime and terrorism investigations. States also referred to the role of regional organizations, databases and platforms in supporting international intelligence, law enforcement and financial cooperation through information exchange, the development of specific and joint actions based on the identified threats in the region and training.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> This includes cooperation through the Police Community of the Americas; the Association of Southeast Asian Nations; the Caribbean Customs Organization; the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training; the Office for Coordination of the Fight against Organized Crime and Other Dangerous Forms of Crime in the Territory of the States Members of the Commonwealth of Independent States; the Anti-Terrorism Centre of the Commonwealth of Independent States; the Council of Europe, including through its 24/7 contact points and the monitoring body, the Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money-Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism; the Economic Community of West African States; the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units; the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation; the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation; the Financial Intelligence Consultative Group; the Financial Action Task Force; the Financial Action Task Force of Latin America; the international counter-ISIL coalition; the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization; the Southern African Development Community; and the South American Intelligence Network against Organized Crime and Terrorism.

53. With regard to international cooperation on financial intelligence, Member States highlighted the benefits of exchanges and coordination among financial analysts from different jurisdictions. Some States cooperate bilaterally to conduct proactive financial investigations into terrorism financing and money-laundering.

54. Many Member States gave examples of informal cooperation with law enforcement and judicial personnel from other States to investigate and prosecute terrorism and organized crime offences, including exchanging law enforcement liaison officers to facilitate the sharing of intelligence and information.

55. Member States also rely on formal legal coordination through specialized units dealing with international cooperation, often referred to as a central authority, and actively cooperate with other jurisdictions on mutual legal assistance and extradition requests. Mutual legal assistance on a wide variety of crimes, including those that could directly or indirectly support terrorism, takes place using the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime or bilateral mutual legal assistance treaties as the legal basis.

56. The importance of international cooperation on border security was stressed by Member States and includes collaboration with foreign customs and border agencies guided by national counter-terrorism coordinating bodies, the use of INTERPOL secure communications systems and close contact with international and regional organizations, including through data-sharing.

## **G. Prison management**

57. Several Member States highlighted their efforts to monitor links between prisoners with connections to organized crime and terrorism, respectively, by promoting intelligence-sharing between law enforcement and prison officials, for example through a working group to guide and implement police-prison cooperation and a central investigative unit responsible for gathering and analysing intelligence.

58. Member States shared a range of efforts to prevent the development of links between violent extremist prisoners and the general prison population, including drafting guidelines to limit contact in prison settings, promoting alternatives to imprisonment for minors and others when appropriate, separating violent extremist prisoners from prisoners charged with non-terrorism crimes, closely monitoring prisoners' interactions, utilizing indicators to assess the risk of radicalization to terrorism for each prisoner and implementing drug addiction, education, rehabilitation and other mental health programmes in prison settings.

## **III. Action by United Nations entities**

59. United Nations entities, within their mandates, support Member States in addressing the linkages that may exist between terrorism and organized crime, in line with the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions and in accordance with international law, including international human rights law, international humanitarian law and international refugee law.

60. The coherence and coordination of such efforts are ensured through the Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, chaired by the Office of Counter-Terrorism, and its eight inter-agency working groups, notably those on criminal justice, legal responses and countering the financing of terrorism, chaired by UNODC, border management and law enforcement relating to counter-terrorism, chaired by the Counter-Terrorism

Committee Executive Directorate, and emerging threats and critical infrastructure protection, chaired by INTERPOL.

## A. Legislative, strategic and policy assistance

61. UNODC continued to provide legislative technical assistance and drafting support to Member States in developing and revising their legislative and regulatory frameworks to comply with the international legal frameworks on terrorism, corruption and transnational organized crime, including trafficking in persons, smuggling of migrants, trafficking in firearms, narcotics and money-laundering, with a view to addressing linkages between terrorism and organized crime.

62. The United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute developed, in partnership with the Global Counterterrorism Forum, the Hague Good Practices on the Nexus between Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism, and a subsequent policy toolkit, to facilitate the development of strategies to counter linkages between terrorism and organized crime. Using those tools, the Institute provides States with advice on legal considerations, research and information-sharing, local engagement and capacity-building support, promoting a multidisciplinary approach. UNODC, the Institute, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team have contributed to the development, by the Forum, of an addendum to the Good Practices focused on criminal justice responses.

63. UNODC and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute organized side events in 2019 on the linkages between terrorism and organized crime during the twenty-eighth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the African Regional High-level Conference on Counter-Terrorism and the Prevention of Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism, organized by the Office of Counter-Terrorism and Kenya. Also in 2019, UNODC organized a global conference for national practitioners, international organizations and researchers to develop a strategic approach to policy and criminal justice responses to trafficking in firearms in the context of organized crime and terrorism. The Office of Counter-Terrorism, Tajikistan, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe held in 2019 a regional high-level conference on international and regional cooperation on countering terrorism and its financing through trafficking in drugs and organized crime.

64. In 2020, the Office of Counter-Terrorism, UNODC, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the Office for Disarmament Affairs launched a project on addressing the terrorism-arms-crime nexus, aimed at developing joint approaches to preventing and combating trafficking in firearms and light weapons and terrorists' access thereto, supporting the implementation of Security Council resolution 2370 (2017), the guiding principles on foreign terrorist fighters (S/2015/939, annex II) and the addendum thereto (S/2018/1177, annex) and relevant global instruments on arms control and organized crime.

65. UNODC continued to support the development of international policy on transnational organized crime, corruption and narcotic drugs through the facilitation of the work of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the development of criminal justice norms. It also continued to promote the ratification of those legal instruments and the international instruments against terrorism.

66. UNODC continued to provide strategic input and support to States, in particular in Central and South-East Asia and Southern and West Africa, in developing and

adopting national terrorism financing risk assessments, plans of action and strategies on countering terrorism financing.

67. In response to Security Council resolutions [2331 \(2016\)](#) and [2388 \(2017\)](#), in which the Council highlighted the links between the abduction and enslavement of women and children by terrorist groups and trafficking in persons, UNODC worked in 2020 with the police component of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali to integrate a session on trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, including when perpetrated by terrorist groups or armed groups, into its induction programme. The UNODC *Handbook on Gender Dimensions of Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism* provides guidance to States on a gender-sensitive and victim-centred approach to address trafficking in persons by terrorist groups.

68. To support policymakers and practitioners to prevent the exploitation of and trafficking in children by terrorist groups, to rehabilitate and reintegrate those children, to protect them when coming into contact with the justice system and to hold recruiters accountable, UNODC developed a policy road map and training package for States through the *Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violence Extremist Groups: the Role of the Justice System*.

69. The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research developed a capability maturity model and self-assessment tool designed to assist States in identifying gaps and challenges in their national regulations and preparedness in relation to improvised explosive devices, including on risk education and the control of precursors.

70. The Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs has addressed, within its mandate, linkages between terrorism and organized crime. The United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, in cooperation with partners, including UNODC, facilitated the provision of strategic advice to national law enforcement agencies to counter organized crime and terrorism, promoting good governance, the implementation of border management strategies and the improved detection of trafficking.

71. In view of concerns over the potential impact of measures addressing the linkages between terrorism and organized crime on the protection of human rights and on humanitarian activities and actors, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism is examining the intersection between human rights, organized crime and counter-terrorism during country visits conducted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution [40/16](#).

72. UNODC has developed a range of practical resources and guidance material, conducted research on regional trends, including in the Sahel and Eastern Africa, and carried out project evaluations that identified commonalities and best practice in preventing and countering organized crime and terrorism. Its Education for Justice initiative has produced a university module on the linkages between organized crime and terrorism. The UNODC knowledge management portal known as Sharing Electronic Resources and Laws on Crime (SHERLOC) contains databases of case law, legislation and national strategies involving linkages between terrorism and organized crime.

## **B. Intelligence collection and sharing assistance**

73. The Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team has convened regular regional meetings of heads or other senior members of Member States' counter-terrorism agencies, including in the Middle East and North Africa, East Africa, West

Africa and South-East Asia, to enhance international intelligence liaison on counter-terrorism issues, including those overlapping with organized crime.

74. UNODC continued to build State capacity with regard to intelligence-sharing mechanisms, the collection and exploitation of electronic data and open-source intelligence and the use of special investigative techniques and other criminal intelligence collection and cooperation good practice, in compliance with human rights, that can identify and address linkages between terrorism and organized crime.

75. The Office of Counter-Terrorism launched a new global programme to support Member States in establishing what are known as “fusion cells” to strengthen national inter-agency intelligence capacity and cooperation to detect, prevent, investigate and respond to terrorism through the collation and analysis of information, including on other serious crimes, while respecting international human rights obligations and standards. The United Nations Police Division provided strategic and technical expertise to the programme.

76. The police component of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali has supported the national analysis and intelligence fusion centre through capacity-building activities. The police component of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has supported the Congolese police in establishing a dedicated crime intelligence unit through strategic advice and operational capacity-building support.

77. INTERPOL reported that it had analysed linkages between terrorism and organized crime through the identification of trafficking and smuggling convergences and the collection of intelligence on bomb makers and improvised explosive devices. It indicated that it was also conducting component material sourcing and device profiling to highlight the role of organized crime in supplying terrorist groups with component parts of improvised explosive devices.

78. INTERPOL reported supporting State law enforcement organizations to address the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon and identify possible links with organized crime by providing analytical support to uncover connections, facilitating, in cooperation with the global counter-ISIL coalition, the dissemination of foreign terrorist fighter biometric records collected in conflict zones to global law enforcement, identifying terrorists within irregular migration routes using INTERPOL biometric databases and issuing blue notices to warn countries of a suspected terrorist’s cross-border movement.

### **C. Anti-money-laundering and countering financing of terrorism**

79. INTERPOL indicated that it had supported national financial intelligence units to exchange and cross-check data on terrorism financing and money-laundering, with the information disseminated to States to enhance existing investigations, trigger new cases and address linkages between terrorism and organized crime.

80. The United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute supported States in building improved methodologies for tracing, seizing and confiscating assets linked to terrorism financing or organized crime and to implement the measures.

81. The Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate has incorporated elements of Security Council resolution [2482 \(2019\)](#) into its assessment methodology, tools and engagement with Member States. Pursuant to resolutions [2331 \(2016\)](#) and [2388 \(2017\)](#), it has also routinely enquired about alleged or noted links between trafficking in persons and terrorism financing for sexual violence or terrorism purposes.

82. UNODC, working closely with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the Financial Action Task Force and Financial Action Task Force-style regional bodies, continued to support States to combat terrorism financing and money-laundering, implementing policies consistent with Security Council resolutions and Financial Action Task Force recommendations. Such efforts include facilitating the identification of trends, vulnerabilities and disruption options, including on linkages between organized crime and terrorism financing, raising awareness of potential organized crime involvement in the abuse of non-profit organizations for terrorism financing and developing financial red flag indicators for the identification of suspicious transactions related to trafficking. UNODC delivered training packages for law enforcement officials, prosecutors, intelligence agencies, the military, bank authorities, financial intelligence units and decision makers on disrupting opportunistic linkages between organized crime and terrorism financing, conducting financial intelligence analysis and investigations and drafting Council sanctions listings. UNODC also continued to promote inter-agency cooperation, including joint investigative task forces and public-private information-sharing partnerships.

83. In response to Security Council resolutions [2462 \(2019\)](#) and [2482 \(2019\)](#), the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre of the Office of Counter-Terrorism expanded its programme on countering the financing of terrorism to provide States with relevant guidance, including through an updated technological platform to support financial intelligence units. The programme, with UNODC, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, INTERPOL and the Office of Information and Communications Technology as key implementing partners, includes priorities that directly address linkages between terrorism and transnational organized crime, including illegal cross-border transportation of cash and bearer-negotiable instruments, innovative financial technology, including mobile payment services and virtual assets, and regulation of money and value transfer systems.

#### **D. Interdiction and border security assistance**

84. The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre has assisted States in establishing dedicated border control units, strengthening inter-agency coordination and developing regional and national border security and management strategies and action plans, including policies to counter terrorism and transnational organized crime, in accordance with international law, including international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law. The programme has helped States to improve databases on organized crime and terrorism to enhance early detection of possible links. The programme published a handbook on human rights and screening in border security and management.

85. The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre has developed, jointly with the Global Counterterrorism Forum, a trainers' curriculum on the implementation of the Forum's good practices in the area of border security and management in the context of countering terrorism and stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, in which synergies in countering terrorism and cross-border organized crime are highlighted.

86. The Office of Counter-Terrorism has launched the United Nations Countering Terrorist Travel Programme to support States in building detection capabilities through the establishment of passenger information units. The Programme is implemented jointly with UNODC, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the Office of Information and Communications Technology and INTERPOL to assist (currently) 36 States in establishing legislative frameworks, setting up passenger information units, connecting with travel carriers and deploying the United Nations goTravel software

for the timely processing of passenger data such as advance passenger information and passenger name records. The units allow mapping and analysis of the nexus between suspected terrorists and serious criminals. The Programme is being expanded to include a maritime component.

87. The World Customs Organization has supported States to address trafficking in arms, drugs, cigarettes, counterfeit goods, cultural heritage, wildlife and natural goods, the proceeds of which are often used to fund terrorist activities. It offered training to promote good practice in relation to evidence collection, case management, intelligence handling and electronic systems to record seizure data and provided detection equipment and training to countries in South-East Asia and West and Central Africa to support customs agencies in addressing terrorism.

88. UNODC and the World Customs Organization have continued to build the capacity of global ports and cargo facilities to disrupt organized criminal and terrorist networks seeking to exploit the containerized trade supply chain. UNODC continued to enhance the capabilities of customs and law enforcement personnel to detect and interdict shipments of illicit goods that may be used to fuel organized crime and finance terrorist groups.

89. UNODC continued to support States to enhance maritime border controls, identify and disrupt transnational threats by sea and improve maritime coordination and information-sharing, including efforts to disrupt linkages between terrorism and trafficking in Central Asia, Eastern and Southern Africa and Indonesia.

90. UNODC, the World Customs Organization and INTERPOL continued to jointly implement a project to strengthen the capacity of participating international airports to detect and intercept drugs, other illicit goods and high-risk passengers, including foreign terrorist fighters, in origin, transit and destination countries and to communicate and cooperate with one another.

91. UNODC continued to support countries in the Middle East, North Africa, the Western Balkans and Central, South and South-East Asia to effectively investigate and prosecute foreign terrorist fighters, including to combat the illegal production of identity documents, smuggling networks and other criminal acts that facilitate the movement of foreign terrorist fighters.

## **E. Law enforcement and criminal justice assistance**

92. UNODC continued to support States globally to build criminal justice capacity to effectively investigate, prosecute and adjudicate terrorism acts with links to organized crime, including through specialized investigative skills and the capacity to utilize financial evidence. It has promoted inter-agency cooperation between criminal justice officials to better address complex terrorism cases with potential links to organized crime.

93. UNODC continued to provide capacity-building support to strengthen law enforcement and border control capacity to collect, stockpile and dispose of seized and confiscated firearms, mark and register weapons and detect, investigate and prosecute trafficking in firearms and related crimes, addressing interlinkages with organized crime, trafficking in drugs and terrorism. UNODC created guiding templates for firearms-relevant investigations, is developing a case digest of good practice in the investigation and prosecution of firearms trafficking cases in the context of organized crime and terrorism and supported States in developing firearms record-keeping systems and implementing national arms surrender campaigns.

94. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNODC, in cooperation with INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization and the

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, have built States' capacity to implement Security Council resolution 2347 (2017) on the protection of cultural heritage in the context of armed conflict and countering trafficking in cultural property and linkages that may benefit terrorist groups. Activities include raising awareness, supporting international cooperation and building the capacity of cultural heritage professionals, the judiciary, the police, customs officers and art market and financial services professionals to prevent and counter trafficking in cultural property as a source of terrorism financing. UNODC developed a practical assistance tool to assist States in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 69/196 on the International Guidelines for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Responses with Respect to Trafficking in Cultural Property and Other Related Offences.

95. The police components in all United Nations peace operations have established serious and organized crime support units to help State authorities with their investigative capability to address organized crime and terrorism cases. That includes support to investigate, prosecute, disrupt and dismantle trafficking networks and to prevent acts of terrorism. In non-mission settings, at the request of Member States, the Standing Police Capacity provides operational and strategic support to police forces, including to support criminal investigations.

96. The Office of Counter-Terrorism, UNODC, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute and INTERPOL have supported States' efforts to prevent organized crime and terrorist groups from gaining access to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials and dual-use equipment, including through the darknet. Through programmes, they help to build law enforcement capacity and enhance information-sharing to prevent, detect, respond to and investigate radiological and nuclear crime and strengthen biological and chemical security.

97. The Office of Counter-Terrorism and its United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre continued to support States in enhancing their capacity to prevent the misuse of new technologies for terrorism purposes, including terrorists' access to cybercapabilities through organized criminal organizations, and to counter and investigate terrorist activities online and to gather digital forensic evidence while respecting human rights.

98. UNODC continued to support States to combat corruption, which can undermine effective criminal justice responses to the linkages between terrorism and organized crime, by training border, police and other criminal justice officials on integrity and conducting effective corruption investigations.

## **F. International cooperation**

99. UNODC continued to support improved coordination and cooperation between regional and international criminal intelligence centres and is developing informal standardized operating procedures therefor.

100. UNODC has continued to contribute to enhancing international cooperation on organized crime and terrorism, supporting the establishment and operation of networks of central authorities and prosecutors, as well as on asset recovery, in West Africa, Central Africa, the Sahel and globally.

101. UNODC, jointly with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the International Association of Prosecutors, has supported States to identify the steps required to gather, preserve and obtain electronic evidence from foreign jurisdictions in investigations related to counter-terrorism and cross-border organized

crime, utilizing the *Practical Guide for Requesting Electronic Evidence across Borders* developed in 2018.

## **G. Prison management**

102. In Mali, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute has developed tailored rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for violent extremist prisoners, which benefit from interviews with such prisoners to understand the path to violent extremism and any linkages between terrorism and organized crime. The Institute also conducted research inside and outside prisons to increase understanding of the subject and develop context-specific responses.

103. The Institute has supported States to adopt alternative and diversion measures in the juvenile justice system, given that juveniles recruited by organized crime groups and sentenced to imprisonment may be more vulnerable to recruitment by terrorist organizations.

104. UNODC and the Office of Counter-Terrorism, in partnership with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, have established a joint project to support States to prevent the spread of violent extremism in prisons by building the capacity of prison services to effectively manage violent extremist prisoners and prevent risks of radicalization to violence among prisoners.

## **IV. Concluding observations**

105. Terrorism and organized crime undermine the rule of law and human rights as the foundations of peaceful, inclusive and prosperous societies. The ability of terrorists to draw on organized crime, whether domestic or transnational, online or offline, can exacerbate the threat posed by terrorism to international peace and security.

106. Many Member States have already adopted responses that anticipate and address the possible linkages between terrorism and organized crime, as identified in Security Council resolution [2482 \(2019\)](#). States highlighted a range of legislative, policy and operational measures to combat organized crime and terrorism financing in its various manifestations, to combat corruption, to strengthen border security and cross-border cooperation mechanisms and interdict terrorist travel, to comprehensively tackle trafficking, including in drugs, and to address linkages between terrorism and organized crime in prison settings. States reported working closely with United Nations entities and regional organizations in that respect.

107. The Security Council, in its resolution [2482 \(2019\)](#), urged Member States to ensure that all measures taken to counter terrorism complied with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law, and took into account the potential effect of the measures on exclusively humanitarian activities. Few States reported action being taken to protect human rights and humanitarian action and actors in the context of measures addressing linkages between terrorism and organized crime. While effectively combating terrorism and organized crime require in many respects the same tools, such as special investigative techniques, detection and financial investigations, it is important that States adopt human rights-based approaches to address those crimes and not conflate the legal regimes in order to ensure that counter-terrorism legislation and measures, which are generally more restrictive than other criminal law provisions, are not broadly applied to other criminal acts. That requires using precise and clear definitions of terrorism and organized crime offences, consistent with the principle of

legality, the imposition of safeguards and limitations regarding the use of special investigatory powers in accordance with applicable international human rights law obligations and the establishment of independent and effective oversight mechanisms.

108. While the potential linkages between terrorism and organized crime are many and varied, some Member States reported limited information and capacity to establish their existence and nature within their jurisdiction. States should continue to proactively exchange information to support additional research and collect empirical evidence. Doing so is critical to accurately identify the risks, nature and scope of any linkages, including the vulnerability of certain economic sectors and the impact of the linkages and responses to them on human rights, to ensure appropriate legal and operational responses that do not overstate linkages or resort to unnecessary or disproportionate measures that could result in human rights violations.

109. While some Member States reported on efforts to combat trafficking in persons, further action would be necessary to implement Security Council resolutions [2331 \(2016\)](#), [2388 \(2017\)](#) and [2482 \(2019\)](#) to investigate all instances of trafficking in persons and related financial aspects, to ensure that those responsible are punished with penalties that are commensurate with the gravity of the crime and to amend national legislation to ensure that it comprehensively addresses all forms of trafficking in persons and all other acts of sexual and gender-based violence, including when committed by armed or terrorist groups, while supporting victims.

110. The Security Council, in its resolution [2482 \(2019\)](#), encouraged Member States to address the illicit exploitation of and trafficking in natural resources, drugs and other goods that could benefit terrorist groups and to address the illegal trafficking in and manufacture and possession of small arms, explosives, military and dual-use materials and related components. Some States reported on efforts in that regard. States are encouraged to continue and, as appropriate, increase their efforts to address possible linkages, including by ratifying and implementing the relevant international instruments and establishing criminal offences to hold those responsible accountable.

111. Some States reported on their efforts to prevent linkages between prisoners held for terrorism offences and those for other offences. It would be beneficial to continue and further build police-prison intelligence, rehabilitation programmes for violent extremist prisoners and prison management strategies conducive to rehabilitation and reintegration. Those efforts should uphold the human rights and fundamental freedoms afforded to any person deprived of liberty.

112. Given the complexity of addressing the multifaceted and potentially evolving linkages between terrorism and organized crime, Member States are encouraged to continue their efforts to develop integrated approaches and capacities to assess, identify and respond to such linkages, taking into account their national context and acting in accordance with the relevant international legal frameworks related to terrorism and organized crime, including international human rights law. In their contributions, States reported measures that could be beneficial for others. However, States should ensure that measures are adopted and implemented in accordance with international law, including international human rights law, and in line with the principles of legality, necessity, proportionality and non-discrimination. It is also recommended that States take gender and age considerations into account.

113. Member States should consider strengthening national coordination mechanisms to promote inter-agency participation and information exchange, facilitating joint monitoring, threat assessments and responses to linkages between terrorism and organized crime. They include the development of strategic policy frameworks and action plans promoting and guiding a whole-of-government approach, establishing intelligence and operational coordination mechanisms or centres and encouraging public-private partnerships.

114. Responding to Security Council resolutions [2462 \(2019\)](#) and [2482 \(2019\)](#), Member States could further develop their capacity to prevent terrorism financing, including through the adoption of the necessary legislation, the development of national financial action plans, the establishment of mechanisms such as inter-agency coordination groups to facilitate the timely exchange of financial information and intelligence, the use of regular terrorism financing risk assessments and the further promotion and strengthening of the role of financial intelligence units in collecting, analysing and disseminating financial intelligence to investigators.

115. To further promote border security efforts to prevent the illicit transit of goods and people while facilitating legitimate movement, Member States could consider strengthening, with appropriate human rights safeguards, control systems for people, cargo and baggage, utilizing new technology, expanding the use of risk analysis based on intelligence and law enforcement data and supporting closer cooperation between customs and law enforcement agencies.

116. Member States could also consider building criminal justice capacity to address the linkages by encouraging intelligence and law enforcement coordination to promote intelligence-led policing, establishing specialized units dealing with terrorism, organized crime and its financing, using financial intelligence and special investigative techniques to proactively investigate cases, establishing databases and benefiting from new technologies to collect and analyse information, strengthening evidence collection and preservation, including electronic evidence, establishing joint inter-agency investigation task forces and promoting mechanisms to encourage coordination between federal and local investigators and prosecutors. States could also consider adopting investigative and prosecutorial strategies that accord priority to building cases against organized crime or terrorism networks, and those who finance and support them. States should carefully design, implement, monitor and assess such measures and subject them to independent and effective oversight, to uphold the rule of law and protection of human rights, in particular freedom from torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, the rights to liberty and security of person, privacy and a fair trial.

117. States could consider updating national legislation to ensure that terrorist and organized crime offences are precisely, narrowly and distinctly defined, in accordance with international law and in line with international standards and good practice,<sup>3</sup> criminalize support and other facilitation acts in order to enable the prosecution of criminal and terrorist networks, enable inter-agency intelligence and criminal justice cooperation on terrorism and organized crime and clarify domestic courts' jurisdiction over terrorism or organized crime cases.

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<sup>3</sup> See, in particular, the model definition recommended by the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism ([A/HRC/16/51](#)).