



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

RESULTS REPORT

2021-2023



**POST-RELEASE
MONITORING
AND PROBATION OF
RETURNING FOREIGN
TERRORIST FIGHTERS
AND VIOLENT
EXTREMIST
OFFENDERS IN THE
KYRGYZ REPUBLIC**

PROJECT BACKGROUND

This two-year project, implemented by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) with the financial support of the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Counterterrorism, aimed to provide comprehensive support to the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic in its efforts to monitor and supervise violent extremist and terrorist offenders. It did this by:

- Developing and implementing strategies and measures to enhance the capacity for effective monitoring, aiming to prevent further radicalization to violence and reduce recidivism rates
- Building the capacity of the Probation Department and its staff to classify offenders accurately and create suitable monitoring plans through the development and implementation of risk and needs assessment tools, manuals, and protocols

COUNTERPARTS

The Probation Department under the Ministry of Justice
Ministry of Internal Affairs
Kyrgyz Republic Akyikatchy (Ombudsperson)



Through coordinated actions, the partnership between the Ministry of Justice of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Bureau of Counterterrorism of the U.S. State Department and UNODC enhanced the effectiveness of monitoring and supervision measures in Central Asia, thereby minimizing the potential threats posed by returning foreign terrorist fighters and violent extremist offenders. By addressing the complex and multifaceted challenges of reintegration, this collaboration played a crucial role in safeguarding communities and promoting long-term stability.



*Ayaz Baetov,
Minister of Justice, December 2022*

RESULTS

During the period 2021 – 2023, the project achieved measurable and valuable results that enhanced the capacity of the Probation Department and other relevant agencies to monitor and supervise returning foreign terrorist fighters (FTF) and violent extremist (VE) offenders. The project successfully accomplished the following objectives by 2023:

- Law enforcement in the Kyrgyz Republic increased their capacity to monitor foreign terrorist fighters and violent extremist offenders upon release effectively, in accordance with human rights and international best practices
- The Probation Department and other relevant agencies and ministries institutionalized tools, standard operating procedures, and policies to ensure the effective monitoring and supervision of released FTF and violent extremist offenders.
- The Probation Department and other relevant agencies and ministries demonstrated a measurable increase in their capacity to support and monitor the reintegration of FTF and VE offenders.
- The project actively facilitated the sharing and institutionalization of best practices and guidelines on probation and post-release monitoring of violent extremist and terrorist offenders with other countries in Central Asia.



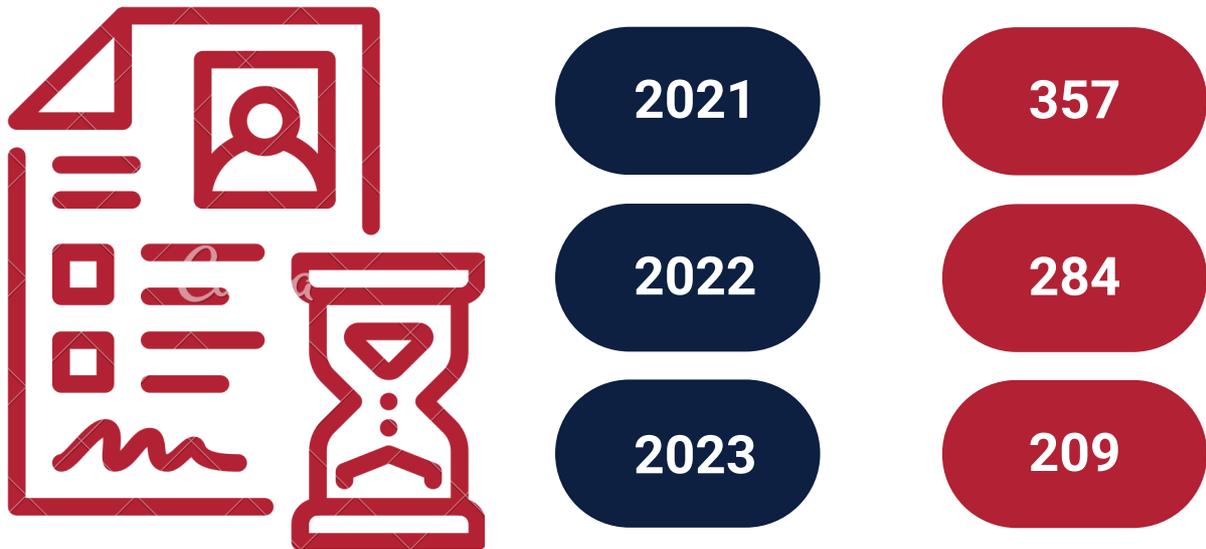
As the lead UN entity in supporting the Kyrgyz Republic to strengthen its criminal justice system to manage the rehabilitation and reintegration process of RFTFs, the Ministry of Justice welcomes the cooperation with UNODC to support the strengthening of monitoring of post-release RFTFs and violent extremist offenders under probation supervision”

*Kynatbek Smanaliev,
Deputy Minister of Justice of
the Kyrgyz Republic (2021)*



FACTS AND FIGURES

NUMBER OF PERSONS CHARGED WITH AND CONVICTED FOR VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM – RELATED CRIMES IN PRISONS AND PROBATION



NUMBER OF PERSONS CHARGED WITH AND CONVICTED FOR VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM – RELATED CRIMES BY GENDER



INCREASED CAPACITY TO EFFECTIVELY MONITOR RFTF AND VIOLENT EXTREMIST OFFENDERS AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF TOOLS, STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES, AND POLICIES

Significant progress was made during the project period in enhancing the capacity to effectively monitor RFTF and violent extremist offenders. The project successfully institutionalized various tools, standard operating procedures, and policies related to monitoring.

The following products were developed:

- A comprehensive feasibility study was conducted on the use of electronic bracelets for extremist and terrorist offenders.
- A feasibility study was conducted on the establishment of a re-entry resource center for post-release FTFs and VE offenders
- Internal and external monitoring and evaluation tools were developed to ensure the quality of client supervision. These tools underwent successful piloting in 2022 by the Probation Department and the Ombudsperson Office of the Kyrgyz Republic.
- Risk and needs assessment tools, along with a pocketbook on the use of these tools, were developed to facilitate effective assessment of FTFs and VE offenders to determine the appropriate classification and interventions approach during the monitoring period
- Bylaws were formulated for the implementation of the Law on Countering Violent Extremists in the Kyrgyz Republic

In addition to these achievements, UNODC actively engaged in partnerships with the government, civil society organizations and international partners to further enhance the project's impact. Through these partnerships, UNODC collaborated closely with government agencies involved in preventing violent extremism and countering terrorism, such as the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior and other relevant law enforcement bodies.

This collaboration helped ensure the effective implementation of the developed tools, standard operating procedures, and policies for monitoring FTFs and VE offenders, and supported the alignment of national laws and practices with international standards and norms. It also allowed the national priorities outlined in the 'Programme of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic on Countering Extremism and Terrorism for 2023-2027' to be addressed. Through this approach, UNODC contributed to strengthening Kyrgyzstan's legal framework and implementation strategies in relations to countering violent extremism and terrorism, ensuring that they are effective and in line with global best practices.

IMPROVED MONITORING AND SUPERVISION THROUGH RISK AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT



During the initial stages of the project, the Probation Department implemented a practice that required all clients to participate in bi-monthly monitoring and supervision visits at the department. However, this approach proved to have negative implications for probation officers, as they were unable to allocate sufficient time to each offender. Consequently, the monitoring and supervision of each individual were limited in nature.

This restricted approach hindered the probation officers' ability to gather comprehensive information and provide appropriate interventions to each offender. Identifying which individuals required more intensive supervision also became challenging. This is significant, as research has found that an inadequate level of supervision can have a significant impact on the rate of recidivism (Andrews & Bonta, 2006).

To address the limitations of the previous monitoring and supervision approach, UNODC and the Probation Department collaborated on the development of a comprehensive classification system and risk and needs assessment tools. These tools utilize the drivers of violent extremism as indicators and were inspired by the successful approaches used by the Latvia State Probation Service, Directorate General of Correction of Indonesia, and the United States Probation and Pretrial Services.

The risk and needs assessment tools were tailored to include specific indicators for female offenders, acknowledging and addressing the unique challenges they may face that could impact their participation in reintegration activities.

“This risk and needs assessment methodology combines elements from international practices while also considering the unique contextual factors and specific challenges faced in Kyrgyzstan. It offers a comprehensive and effective approach to monitoring and supervising high-risk offenders and allows us to better address the specific needs and mitigate the risks associated with violent extremist offenders.”

*Elizat Isaeva,
Co-Lead on Assessment and Classification
of Offenders, Probation Department*

In 2021, UNODC and the Probation Department collaborated on capacity-building efforts that enhanced the capacity of 15 national trainers (66.7% female) through a ‘training of trainers’ initiative. These trainers were equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to conduct training sessions on proper classification and the effective utilization of the assessment tools.

These trainers organized training sessions for 88 officers across the country. The results were encouraging, with 95% of the officers demonstrating an increased understanding of classification. By disseminating this knowledge and fostering a human-rights and gender-responsive approach, the training program contributed to enhancing the overall effectiveness and inclusivity of the Probation Department's operations.

With the implementation of the new classification system, high-risk offenders will be subjected to stringent monitoring and intervention plans until subsequent assessments indicate a decrease in their predicted recidivism rates. This focused approach ensures that resources are allocated effectively, allowing for targeted and tailored interventions and support for individuals who require it the most.

INCREASED CAPACITY TO SUPPORT REINTEGRATION



UNODC, in partnership with Evidence Central Asia, a research centre based in the Kyrgyz Republic, undertook an extensive study on the barriers to reintegration faced by former violent extremist offenders and adult returning foreign terrorist fighters. The study aimed to shed light on the challenges these individuals encounter when reintegrating into society.

To ensure a comprehensive and inclusive approach, the study underwent a rigorous validation process. The team convened an open discussion forum in June 2023, featuring the active participation of representatives from the Central Government, local government authorities, civil society organizations and international development partners. This inclusive discussion forum allowed for diverse perspectives and valuable insights to be shared, contributing to the quality and relevance of the study findings.

Through targeted trainings and workshops, UNODC enhanced the capacity of around 150 probation officers and facilitated the acquisition of specialized tools, techniques, and strategies to address the unique challenges of reintegrating FTFs and violent extremist offenders. This capacity-building initiative aimed to foster improved social reintegration, rehabilitation, and sustainable reintegration opportunities for those individuals transitioning back into society. This laid the foundation for a safer and more secure society, promoting the reintegration of FTFs and violent extremist offenders as productive and law-abiding members of society.

AREAS OF FOCUS WITHIN THE TRAINING CURRICULUM INCLUDE:

- Appropriate approaches to post-release supervision and support
- Effective communication to improve monitoring of violent extremist offenders
- Introduction to motivational interviewing
- Conflict de-escalation techniques
- Personal safety of probation officers
- The cognitive-behavioural approach to disengagement work
- Identification and countering of deception by violent extremist clients

These modules are scheduled for rollout in 2024 and 2025, and are structured in such a way to ensure that all probation officers receive comprehensive training on working with probation clients before progressing to advanced training specifically tailored for working with violent extremist offenders.

The incorporation of these topics into the training curriculum for the Probation Department not only addresses immediate needs but also contributes to the long-term sustainability of the project.

By building the capacity of probation officers in these critical areas, the project ensures that the quality of monitoring and supervision remains consistently high, leading to improved outcomes in the reintegration process of FTFs and violent extremist offenders.



Establishing a mutual understanding and achieving an atmosphere of trust with the most hardened offenders convicted for violent extremism and terrorism related crimes takes more than one conversation, but through participations in the training, I learned other means and “keys” to motivate clients in participating and engaging with me during the monitoring visits.

*Maksat Nogoibaev,
Head of Theology Unit,
Probation Department*

SHARING BEST PRACTICES

REGIONAL KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND COLLABORATION



Through various initiatives and partnerships, UNODC facilitated the regional exchange of knowledge, best practices, and expertise among Member States. These fruitful collaborations provided an invaluable platform for countries to learn from one another and share successful strategies.

Key areas of focus included the development and implementation of risk and needs assessment tools for violent extremist and terrorist offenders, use of alternative and non-custodial measures to imprisonment for violent extremist offenses, prevention of violent extremism within prison settings and post-release, the use of electronic bracelets in post-release monitoring of violent extremist offenders, and strategies to reduce recidivism rates.

By promoting these regional partnerships, UNODC contributed to the strengthening of criminal justice systems in Central Asia, helping Member States address common challenges and foster innovative approaches to tackling violent extremism and terrorism.

SHARING BEST PRACTICES

EXCHANGE OF KNOWLEDGE WITH INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

UNODC organized and facilitated two exchange visits, fostering knowledge sharing and cooperation in the management of violent extremist offenders. A study visit to the USA allowed participants to learn about the comprehensive management of terrorist offenders, spanning from pre-trial to post-release supervision. Through hands-on training, they gained valuable insights into the methodologies employed to engage clients effectively. Participants also had the opportunity to learn from judges, the Attorney General's office, defence attorneys, local probation offices, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to understand the multi-sectoral approach taken for the management of terrorist offenders.



There are no easy solutions or readily available proven practices. However, during this visit, the Kyrgyz Government stakeholders expressed a strong desire to improve the system's capacity to manage, rehabilitate, and reintegrate violent extremist and terrorist offenders through a unified approach

*Kevin Lowry,
Former Chief United States
Probation and Pretrial Services
Officer for the U.S. District Court
of Minnesota*

UNODC also facilitated a high-level visit to the Republic of Indonesia, where delegates met with the relevant Deputy Ministers and the Chief of Staff of the President. The purpose of this visit was to foster collaboration and knowledge exchange regarding the management of repatriates, returnees, and violent extremist offenders. The discussions focused on sharing experiences, lessons learned, and exploring opportunities for future cooperation in this critical area.

These exchange visits provided valuable platforms for professionals to learn from international experience, strengthen partnerships, and enhance their capacities in effectively managing violent extremist offenders.

UNODC extends its sincere gratitude to the Ministry of Justice and civil society organizations of the Kyrgyz Republic for their invaluable partnership, which has been instrumental in the successful implementation of the project.

Additionally, UNODC expresses its thanks to the Bureau of Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State for its strategic and financial support.

the report is designed by Vasilina Brazhko